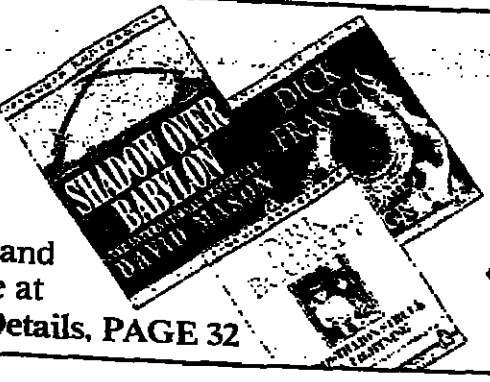


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ARTS

Mark Knopfler on his own and in dire straits
PAGE 34



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PAGE 36



Downing St anger as fear over mad cow disease grows and three EU partners end imports

French lead Euro-ban on British beef

By BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS, CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS
ROGER BOYES IN BONN AND PHILIP WEBSTER IN LONDON

BRITAIN was in confrontation with its European partners last night after France, Belgium and The Netherlands halted imports of British beef and Germany called for a continent-wide ban.

At the same time, councils across Britain removed beef from the menus of thousands of schools and old people's homes in the light of new evidence linking "mad cow" disease and a human brain disorder. And the meat industry warned ministers that they could face a multimillion pound compensation bill.

The French action removed at a stroke Britain's most valuable market for beef — amounting to 80,000 tonnes a year worth £220 million — and dealt a devastating blow to the Government, butchers and farmers as they tried to reassure domestic consumers.

Downing Street declared the continental bans illegal, and Brussels deplored them, but some formal control on British exports seems un-

avoidable when the European Commission's veterinary committee meets on Monday. One official said: "The new British statement makes it hard to carry on as before."

Germany, which has been campaigning for years to get the possible danger posed to humans by "mad cow" disease taken seriously, is certain to press for tough restrictions — and it could well sway the whole Union against Britain.

For two years, it has sought a comprehensive statement on British meat after coming under pressure from consumers, local politicians and farmers who have watched with alarm as German consumption of all meat has slumped in spite of posters at supermarkets, butcher shops and restaurants highlighting the source of all their meat.

Yesterday its health and agriculture ministries issued a statement saying: "On the basis of the new information, the aim must be to secure a general export ban from Britain for meat, meat products, offal, animal meal and raw materials for pharmaceuticals and cosmetics in the European Union." The ministries also said that they would be urging action against other countries where "mad cow" disease has been identified.

In Brussels, however, the Commission insisted that it would do nothing until after the veterinary committee had reviewed the latest evidence. British officials reported to the farm directorate yesterday and the EU's panel of independent scientific experts are to consider the issue at a regular meeting today. "We must not

exaggerate the problem. It is only a problem in the UK and we should not overstate the extent of it," a spokesman for the farm commissioner said.

Britain's position was put by Kevin Taylor, the Government's assistant chief scientific veterinary officer, and other officials. Mr Taylor said that his duty was not to reassure but to inform the EU of the Government's actions, which he felt were sufficient.

The final decision on any EU action will come from the Commission rather than the council of member states, and British officials were lobbying to avoid any drastic steps such as an outright ban that would carry far-reaching political implications. Beyond the scientific arguments, it would signal a lack of confidence in the Government and deepen the mutual suspicions that dog British relations with its continental partners.

Yesterday, Euro-sceptics were already railing against France and Sir Teddy Taylor called for a retaliatory ban on French beef and wine, saying: "We get far better wine from Australia and New Zealand."

Douglas Hogg denounced the French move as unreasonable, unnecessary and "a wholly disproportionate response" as Britain made urgent representations to Brussels to have the embargo lifted.

Mr Hogg said it raised "very strong questions of legality". Continued on page 5, col 1



Business carries on as usual at London's Smithfield meat market yesterday as traders wait for repercussions of the French beef ban

Meat course scotched by Parisians

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE kilted bagpiper did his best, but a promotional lunch in Paris yesterday to encourage French consumption of Scottish products including "juicy Scotch beef" was a tense and nervous affair, coinciding with the total French ban on British beef.

"It's a disaster," declared Kate Frears, spokeswoman for "Food From Britain", which organised the event, part of nationwide promotion entitled "Scotland the Brand" and incorporating, among other groups, the Scotch Beef Club

of France. "The timing could hardly be worse," she added.

All over France members of the Scotch Beef Club, an association of more than 50 top restaurants that feature Scottish beef, will no doubt begin peeling the tartan stickers from their doors as *la maladie de la vache folle* grips the country.

Despite assurances that the risk was "minuscule", some of the guests at yesterday's lunch, held at Bertie's, the celebrated British restaurant in the swanky 16th arrondissement, were not so sure. The Tartare of Smoked Salmon was wolfed down, the

Tobermory malt was quaffed without a second thought, the Creel of Crinan Scallops vanished in moments, but the crunch came with the Angus Beef Fillet.

"Is this a good idea?" asked Renaud Siegmund of Orlovski publishers, eyeing his helping of meat as if it might at any moment leap off the plate and attack him in a frenzy of bovine insanity.

His neighbour on the "Three table" was taking no chances, demanding that her succulent fillet be taken back to the kitchen and returned *bien cuit*, a crime against French gastronomy in any

other circumstances. When the frazzled remnant reappeared she toyed with it, wearing a distracted air.

At the "Mull table" Damian Cronin, the former Scottish rugby international was clearly aware that national pride was at stake and whacked into his Aberdeen Angus with theatrical gusto.

With true Culoden spirit, however, the organisers of the event were not going to let the beef ban get them down. "Scottish food is not just about beef, you know," Alice Wood of "Scotland the Brand" observed brightly. "In New York they loved the lemon curd."



SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



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Guns amnesty to reassure public

By RICHARD FORD AND GILLIAN BOWDITCH

A NATIONWIDE firearms amnesty is to be held within three months, after the massacre of schoolchildren and a teacher in Dunblane, the Prime Minister announced yesterday.

The Government surprised police by disclosing the amnesty as the terms of reference were announced for the official inquiry into the killings.

Michael Howard also disclosed that opposition politicians will be invited to discuss their concerns, adding that the results of a Home Office review of firearms legislation would be given to Lord Cullen's inquiry.

John Major's announcement follows growing concern over firearms controls since the attack last week. An amnesty in 1988 after Michael Ryan's massacre in Hungerford led to 48,000 weapons being handed in.

The Government's swift decision will be seen as a reassurance that it is doing something to meet public concern especially as the inquiry will not report until September. Both the Firearms Consultative Council, the Government watchdog, and chief constables, have been pressing for an amnesty.

Mr Major told the Commons at Question Time: "It has been agreed that an amnesty will take place. The

details are being worked out and we will advise the House as soon as possible." He said that Mr Howard, the Home Secretary, and Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, had been in discussion with the police before the tragedy.

Jim Sharples, president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: "Firearms amnesties do add value to the question of public safety and allow members of the public the opportunity to surrender weapons to the police."

Police sources suggested that the amnesty would take about three months to organise. They want all relinquished weapons to be given forensic tests for possible crime links. The question of

compensation will also have to be addressed.

Lord Cullen's judicial inquiry will have a wide-ranging remit with witnesses required to give evidence under oath. Those failing to comply could be charged with contempt.

Mr Forsyth said the inquiry into the deaths of 16 children, Gwenne Mayor, and the gunman, Thomas Hamilton, at Dunblane Primary School would be similar to that held after the 1966 Aberfan disaster in which 116 children died.

The inquiry, which will start in June, will be held under the auspices of the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921. Lord Cullen carried out the inquiry into the Piper Alpha oil platform disaster.

Ulster elections set for May 30

Irish politicians backed away from a threatened boycott of elections in Northern Ireland. The poll will take place on May 30, leading to all-party talks on June 10.

John Major announced a unique and complicated system of elections to a 110-member peace forum. Gerry Adams said that the plans were anathema to nationalists. Pages 2, 19

Water war

A bid war for South West Water was triggered by Severn Trent moving to buy the company which has had a proposal from Wessex Water on its way to the monopolies commission. Page 23

Drinkers take heart from health survey

By JEREMY LAURANCE AND JOE JOSEPH

WHISKY, beer and gin are good for you and can guard against heart disease, according to American experts.

The scientists at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts, have destroyed the myth that only red wine is beneficial.

In an article in tomorrow's *British Medical Journal*, based on a review of 25 studies on the effect of drinking on heart disease, they conclude that moderate amounts of any alcohol reduce the risk. Current medical advice is that people who take two or three alcoholic drinks a day cut the

danger of a heart attack by one sixth. But some studies show that up to seven units a day are protective — equivalent to three and a half pints of beer or a bottle of wine.

Experiments have shown that any alcohol reduces blood's tendency to clot and increases the level of HDL cholesterol, which fights heart disease.

Starting young: Teenagers drink more alcohol than five years ago and more than half of secondary school pupils have tried it, according to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.



TV & RADIO	42, 43	LETTERS	19	ARTS	33-35	SPORT	39-42, 44
WEATHER	22	OBITUARIES	21	CHESS & BRIDGE	40	EDUCATION	36
CROSSWORDS	22, 44	BERNARD LEVIN	18	COURT & SOCIAL	20	LAW REPORT	32

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Rival packs scoff over dog's breakfast

Paddy Ashdown got it right. The Prime Minister's rueful smile, as he protested that the Liberal Democrat Leader had not got it right, said it all. This plan for Northern Ireland elections was — in Mr Ashdown's words — "a dog's breakfast". But it was "probably the only dog's breakfast on offer. It may well be the best dog's breakfast that can be arrived at." From the Ulster kennels to left and right of the chair the yaps and growls confirmed our canine analysis.

None of these pooches liked the breakfast much; none of them liked each other at all, and every one mistrusted their London kennel masters. How to resolve these

competing hostilities? Northern Ireland's MPs decided to growl at the breakfast but without quite kicking over the dog-bowl: all the while watching rival hounds from the corner of the eye lest any should try to corner the breakfast for themselves.

John Major spoke with force and clarity, but the plans he had to recommend were hard for MPs to grasp. Tony Blair responded positively and with equal dispatch. Paddy Ashdown was brief and plain. The three party leaders were in the mood to be reasonable and make the best of a difficult situation.

But that was the easy part. After all, none of these men



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

was being asked to eat the breakfast. David Trimble, the Leader of the Ulster Unionists, was. And to him this was, frankly, more like cat-food than Pedigree Chum, concocted by "an unholy alliance" between the Paisleyite and the nationalist dog-packs, and Dublin. He couldn't fathom why his own party's breakfast request had been rejected. But still he gave the impression that he and his fellow-hounds might eat the dish if they absolutely had to. For the nationalist-

inclined Social Democratic and Labour Party, Seamus Mallon (Newry & Armagh) bared his teeth and looked almost ready to bite the prime-ministerial hand offering to feed him, but not quite. He accused Major of devising this food to favour the Unionist hounds. Mallon circled the dog's breakfast, barking angrily, refused even to sniff at its contents — and sat down, still snarling. But he had not entirely turned his back on the mess.

For Ian Paisley's Demo-

cratic Unionist Party, Peter Robinson (Belfast E) declared the breakfast to be "the most broadly unacceptable" dog-food it was possible for Major to devise. Pausing to yap at the other "Official" Unionist dogs, across the floor ("whingeing and panicking," he said) he returned to scoff and sneer at what had been placed before him, blaming its contents on them. He too, however, deplored the meal without rejecting it.

Each pack was blaming the ingredients of the breakfast on a conspiracy between the London kennelmaster and the other two dog packs. Speaking as kennelmaster, John Major showed the strain. At Seamus Mallon's

intervention he nearly snapped. To each he repeated that whoever proved the stumbling block to this process would not be forgiven by the people of Northern Ireland themselves.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, impassive on the bench beside him, Major pleaded with earnest, exasperated patience. He looked like a man driven often to the edge, but never over it. The Ulster MPs sounded like men almost ready to give him that final push... but in the event not quite.

"Give them independence!" grunted a despairing Sir Patrick Cormack (C. Stalls S). He grunted for many.

Poll plan for Ulster receives grudging support

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND NICHOLAS WATT

JOHN MAJOR last night cleared a crucial hurdle in the search for peace in Northern Ireland when politicians backed away from a threatened boycott of elections in the Province. They will take place on May 30, with all-party talks scheduled for June 10.

The Prime Minister unveiled a highly complicated system to elect the 110 members of the peace forum. It was forced on him after the political parties failed to agree to any established form of poll.

There will be five seats for each of Northern Ireland's 18 parliamentary constituencies. The electors will vote for a party. Each party will publish a list of five candidates for each constituency and rank their candidates so that the first one is their favourite to succeed. A further 20 seats will be selected through complicated arithmetic after the vote. All the votes in the constituencies will be added together and the ten most successful parties across Northern Ireland will win two elected representatives each from party lists published in advance. The parties elected to the 110-member forum will then select smaller negotiating teams.

Nationalist politicians complained that Mr Major's compromise proposals were Unionist-inspired, but there were no immediate threats to pull out of the elections.

The Prime Minister emphasised that Sinn Féin would not take part in the all-party talks unless the IRA ceasefire was restored and the issue of decommissioning weapons was addressed. The party will, however, be allowed to take part in the elections even if the ceasefire is not revived.

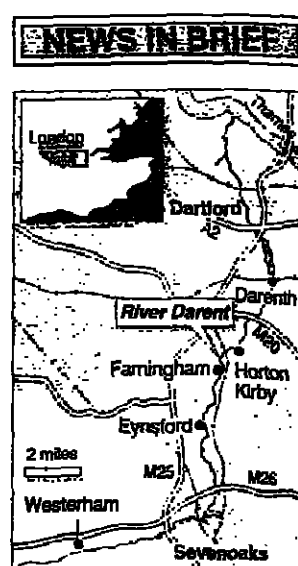
Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, said the election plans were "anathema to nationalists".

Mr Major described the election package as a "viable and reasonable way forward" that demanded "compromise from everybody". He acknowledged there was a risk of politicians refusing to take part, but said that "no one who stands unreasonably in the way of a settlement will be readily forgiven".

Paddy Ashdown, Liberal Democrat leader, described the plans as "a dog's breakfast", but "it may well be the best dog's breakfast".

A senior source in Dublin said: "It gives something to everybody, but nothing to everybody."

Politics, page 10
Leading article, page 19



Kent river saved from drought

The River Darent in Kent is being made drought-proof. The river has run dry during most summers since 1976, but yesterday Lord Crickhowell, chairman of the National Rivers Authority, switched on the first of six artificial springs that will feed the chalk river at times of low flow. Several such schemes are planned. The amount of water taken by Thames Water from the catchment area is being reduced.

Oxford cuts £5.6m

Oxford says the National Lottery is partly to blame for cuts amounting to £5.6 million that are likely to mean the loss of 50 jobs and the closure of overseas projects. People have also been less willing to donate to Oxford's charity shops.

Life for hitman

A hitman who took up a contract on a millionaire car dealer was jailed for life at the Old Bailey. Kevin Lane, 26, of Potton, Bedfordshire, was convicted of murdering Robert Magill, 44, as he walked his dog near his home in Hertfordshire.

£2m mugging

Two muggers escaped with jewels worth almost £2 million after spraying CS gas into the face of a 23-year-old German jewellery salesman in Hatton Garden, central London, on Wednesday night, police said yesterday.

Forward jailed

A rugby forward was jailed for eight months for attacks on two players in different matches. Ian Thickpenny, 31, playing for Barry, broke the jaw of one player and the eye socket of another, Cardiff Crown Court was told.

In harmony

The Hallé Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic are to perform together for the first time next month. The concert at the Royal Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool, marks Granada Television's fortieth anniversary.

Families claim damages as Sheriff contradicts RAF's finding of negligence

Inquiry clears RAF pilots in Chinook helicopter crash

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, MICHAEL EVANS AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE two pilots of the RAF Chinook helicopter that crashed into the Mull of Kintyre killing 25 anti-terrorist specialists cannot be blamed for the tragedy, a second inquiry has ruled.

Sheriff Sir Stephen Young, who carried out a four-week fatal accident inquiry in Paisley, has concluded that he can find no cause for the accident in 1994 and no evidence that it

was caused by pilot error. The report, which is due to be published today, contradicts the official RAF board of inquiry which found the pilots grossly negligent.

Yesterday the families of Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Tapper, 28, and his co-pilot Flight Lieutenant Richard Cook, 30, called on the RAF to retract their finding. Lawyers for the families also said they

would immediately lodge claims for compensation and damages.

Compensation is currently being negotiated by the families of the civilian victims, who included senior members of MI5 and the Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch. The widows of the two pilots feared they would receive no compensation.

Peter Watson, solicitor for the Cook family, said: "They have been completely vindicated. I will be lodging a claim for damages immediately with the RAF on behalf of Flight Lieutenant Cook's widow Sara and two-year-old daughter Eleanor."

However, the Ministry of Defence said the widows had always been entitled to make a claim but had not done so. RAF sources also continued to insist that, despite Sir Stephen's report, there remained no other possible conclusion than the one reached by Air Vice-Marshal John Day, Air Officer Commanding No 1 Group. His judgment that the pilots were to blame was

supported by Air Chief Marshal Sir Bill Wratten, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Strike Command.

The sources said that the board of inquiry led by a wing commander and two squadron leaders found nothing mechanically wrong with the Chinook. One source said: "The fact that the Chinook had to climb suddenly to try to fly over the mountain indicated

that the pilots were taken by surprise. They had been flying below the safe altitude for those sort of weather conditions."

The RAF's position was rejected by John Cook, father of Richard Cook and a former RAF pilot. He said: "The inquiry by Sir Stephen Young has cleared my son's name, which is what we have been fighting for."

The two pilots were flying a new Mark II Chinook when it crashed into a fog-covered mountain on the Mull 20 minutes after take-off. The helicopter was bound for a security conference at Fort George near Inverness.

Sir Stephen said it had not been established to his satisfaction or on the balance of probability that the cause was "the decision of the crew to overfly the Mull of Kintyre at cruising speed and their selection for that purpose of the

incorrect rate of climb". Mr Cook said other Chinook pilots had told him they were worried about its safety.

The inquiry was told that Flight Lieutenant Tapper had voiced a number of concerns about the helicopter which had been brought into service in Northern Ireland only two days before the crash.

Verdicts of accidental death were returned at an inquest into the death of two Britons and three Algerian airmen killed when a plane exporting veal calves to the Continent crashed, narrowly missing a housing estate. The two-day hearing at Coventry was told that stock handlers Adrian Sharp, 31, of Kirkthorpe, near Wakefield, West Yorkshire, and Andrew Yates, 23, of Rugby, Warwickshire, were killed instantly when the Air Algeria Boeing 737 crashed near Coventry airport in December 1994.

Dunblane children go back to school

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THE children of Dunblane Primary School will return to their classes today for the first time since 16 pupils and their teacher were shot dead ten days ago.

Social workers and counsellors will be on hand to help when the school opens between 9am and noon and parents will be invited to stay for a short time.

Gerry McDermott, of the school board, said teachers would try to make the day as normal as possible but he acknowledged that this would be difficult. He said it was still to be decided if the headmaster Ron Taylor, one of the first on the scene after the massacre, would address the whole school of 700 pupils. One problem is that the gym where the shootings took place was also used as the assembly hall. Parents have been sent letters by the local authority outlining arrangements and telling them "it will be a special and different day". A spokeswoman for Central Regional Council's education department said: "I don't think it will be like a normal day. It is more to get them reacquainted with the school and the first stage of getting back to normality."

The last funerals took place yesterday. Gwynne Mayor, the teacher who died, was buried after a service at the 13th-century cathedral. Later the funeral of Brett McKinnon, six, was held at the cathedral. The service for Ross Irvine, five, took place in private in Ayr.

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Personal stereo plea rejected

Inventor who lost leaves taxpayer with £500,000 bill

BY TIM JONES
AND FRANCES GIBB

A WEALTHY German inventor's attempt to prove that he invented the personal stereo will cost the British taxpayer £500,000 after his claim, funded by legal aid, was thrown out by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Andreas Pavel, who has spent his £1 million inheritance in seven years of court battles with Sony in the hope of becoming a multimillionaire, was criticised by the judges for the £2.7 million costs he had run up in court hearings. The proceedings had resulted in "inefficiency, delay and excessive costs", the judges said, as they ordered Herr Pavel to pay the Court of Appeal bill, which alone came to £500,000.

However, payment will fall to the Legal Aid Board which funded Herr Pavel's appeal, despite his shareholdings estimated by Sony's lawyers at "hundreds of thousands of pounds" and strong objections lodged by Sony.

Herr Pavel, 51, who lives in Milan, first thought of his "stereophonic system for personal wear" while on a walking holiday in the 1970s and made a prototype for which he took out patents in Germany, Britain and other countries.

Herr Pavel had claimed that his personal stereo, which incorporated a pair of headphones, a belt, cassette player, amplifier and storage pouch, was inventive and not obvious. However, the judges ruled that his patent was not an inventive concept and refused him leave to appeal in the House of Lords.

Lord Justice Aldous said the



Pavel, who says he will continue his battle

evidence had not established the success of the Walkman was due to the inventive concept as claimed. "The Walkman would have been just as successful without any belt, clip or loop for belt attachment. Its success appears to have been due to its sophisticated system for producing high-quality sound reproduction."

Last night Herr Pavel said: "I am disappointed and frustrated with the judgment. I think the judges were superficial and I don't think they fully understood the concept."

Herr Pavel lodged his original unsuccessful action in the Patents County Court: it cost Sony £1.4 million, Toshiba £300,000 and Herr Pavel £500,000. If he had won his case, he could have expected £100 million in royalties from worldwide sales. Sony is estimated to have earned £3 billion from its Walkman.

In spite of debts now exceeding his assets, Herr Pavel intends to continue his global

legal battle. Asked about the fact he was being funded by the British taxpayer he said: "It was the British legal system that ruined me and I am only using the rules. I would have paid for the appeal but I lost all my money in the first case."

The case is the latest in which the Legal Aid Board has come under fire. Two weeks ago it was strongly criticised over granting legal aid to help a robber to investigate a claim against the police for shooting him during his arrest.

It will also reopen the debate about granting legal aid to foreign nationals. The Lord Chancellor recently consulted on whether foreign nationals should be denied legal aid. Sir Thomas Legg, permanent secretary of the Lord Chancellor's Department, told MPs this week that the overwhelming view from those consulted was that foreign nationals were entitled to legal aid on the same footing as British nationals, who are equally entitled to legal aid that exists in other countries.

Donald Jerrard, a solicitor for Sony, said yesterday: "We will now be pursuing the Legal Aid Board for our costs, although the likelihood is that we shall not be able to get back much more than one third of the total."

He added: "We do not believe he should have been granted legal aid. Herr Pavel had to reveal the extent of his assets after the first hearing, and Sony believes those assets were far in excess of the limit for legal aid. Herr Pavel had argued that his assets were not disposable because the shares were in family companies and so on."



Maggie Atkinson, who was left handcuffed to the banisters overnight after burglars wearing balaclavas stole jewellery and cash

Thieves handcuff Ron Atkinson's wife

BY RICHARD DUCE

THE wife of Ron Atkinson, the Premier League football manager, was handcuffed to the banisters at their home by masked robbers and left for more than 12 hours.

Maggie Atkinson, 47, discovered the three intruders inside the mock-Tudor house in Barnet Green, Hereford and Worcester, where the couple have lived for six months. She was pushed to the floor, her jewellery was taken and then she was marched to the bedroom and forced to hand over cash and other items.

She was handcuffed to the banisters on the landing of the £250,000 house where she was eventually found at 10.30 yesterday morning by Mr Atkinson's driver.

Mr Atkinson, the flamboyant manager of Coventry City and former manager of West

Bromwich Albion, Manchester United, Sheffield Wednesday and Aston Villa, was not at home when the men broke into the house at about 9.30pm on Wednesday.

The raiders struck while he was appearing on television in London to comment on a match between Juventus and Real Madrid in the European Champions' League. He is understood to have stayed in London rather than make the journey back to the Midlands late at night.

He tried to telephone his wife at home but kept getting the answering machine and reported the problem to BT as a potential fault.

The Atkinsons, who married six years ago, are believed to be under contract to tell the story of Wednesday night's incident to a national newspaper. But in a brief

interview with the Coventry Evening Telegraph Mr Atkinson, 56, said yesterday: "The police formed the impression that the burglars had no idea it was my place and that it was just a coincidence."

A spokesman for West Mercia police said last night: "Mrs Atkinson heard noises in the hall and went to investigate. She was confronted by three men wearing balaclavas."

"They forced her to lead them into the bedroom. They were extremely aggressive and stole the jewellery she was wearing. Mrs Atkinson was not physically hurt apart from abrasions caused by the handcuffs, but she was obviously extremely distressed."

"We would ask anyone who saw anything suspicious in the area of Mearse Lane to



Atkinson in London at the time of the attack

contact us." No value has been given for the stolen items. Mr Atkinson said last night: "It has been particularly distressing, but fortunately Maggie is very resilient and took it, not

necessarily well, but showed a lot of courage. She is very tired and is going to bed for a while." He refused to pose for pictures.

Peter Lee, a family friend who was at the house, said: "Ron was away for the night and did not know what had happened to Maggie. The family just want to be left alone as Mrs Atkinson is still in shock and wishes to rest." He said the couple had only moved to the house, at the foot of the Lickey Hills, six months ago. "They lived close by in another house but moved here because it was so secluded," he said.

A neighbour, who did not want to be named, said: "I think she will bear up under the strain but it must have been very frightening. If only she could have got to a phone she would have been able to get help instead of lying there all night."



The Lloyd Webbers, disliked "pin cushion" look

Earl's phone mast riles composer

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE ERECTION of a soft mobile telephone relay mast on the Earl of Carnarvon's estate has led to a war of words with his neighbours, Sir Andrew and Lady Lloyd Webber.

The composer and his wife have objected to the local council, which is considering whether to grant planning permission to the mast tower, which stands in a designated area of outstanding natural beauty on the Highclere Estate in Berkshire. Lord Carnarvon, the Queen's racing manager, allowed Vodafone to erect it last November on his land under Beacon Hill near Newbury on a temporary basis, for which he receives a nominal rent.

The 7th Earl said yesterday that he had allowed it subject to full permission by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. A recommendation by its planning officers to go ahead will be considered next week. The relay mast,

complete with antennae, is needed to boost the signal on the Vodafone network. Sir Andrew and his wife, who live two miles from Lord Carnarvon's Highclere Castle, cannot see it from their home.

But Lady Lloyd Webber said: "We are not whinging about what's going on in our backyard. I am just astonished that the council and the landowner should allow permission for this mast to go up in an area of outstanding natural beauty. With all these masts sprouting up, the countryside is going to be turned into a pin cushion."

Lord Carnarvon said: "You have to judge the mast on what it looks like in its present position against the national need for mobile telephones. If there is a big enough objection locally then we shall not agree to it becoming permanent."

The local authority is believed to have received eight objections.

Lottery winners say they never had it so good

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TWO men who scooped the National Lottery jackpot countered the myth yesterday that winning a fortune leads to misery, broken relationships, press persecution, begging letters and excess.

Bob Westland, a former sub-postmaster from Alloa, near Stirling, who won £3.8 million last July, told the Heritage Select Committee's inquiry into the lottery that it had made him very happy and secure. Mr Westland, 58, who has fulfilled his wife Ann's dream of buying a small country house hotel that they are to run as a family business, denied suggestions from MPs that becoming a millionaire overnight could lead to misery.

"Anyone who says it will make you miserable doesn't know what they are talking about," he said. In addition to setting up the hotel business with two of his sons and his wife, a former deputy headmistress, Mr Westland has given away £500,000 and has set up another son with his own company.

Ken Southwell, a former communications engineer who won £39,000 on the first lottery draw, in November 1994, said that he had been perfectly happy with his life before his win, but conceded that the win had given him

financial security for life. He had also paid off his sister's mortgage and set up a financial fund for her.

Although he had initially been disappointed that his employer, Tele-Aerial Satellite, a subsidiary of BSkyB, had questioned his continuing loyalty and asked him to leave, Mr Southwell, 37, said that with hindsight the firm had done him a favour. He now runs buys and lets houses and plans to expand. Both men said that they did not think that the jackpot prizes were too large. Asked if the win had led to intrusive media coverage, Mr Westland said that the opposite was true. Media interest had been a "seven-day wonder", he said, and had been very well handled by Camelot, the lottery operator.

Mr Southwell said he did not really have the chance to avoid publicity as a winner in the first draw but it had not bothered him. Neither went on a spending spree.

The only criticism the two men had was that they would have preferred two seasons with Camelot's financial advisers instead of one. Asked by MPs how they chose their numbers, Mr Southwell said his were based on birthdays while Mr Westland revealed his were random.

Parishioners' charity donations went to 'nonexistent' orphanage

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

PARISHIONERS at a church in North Wales have given thousands of pounds to an orphanage in India that does not appear to exist.

For more than ten years, up to 50 churchgoers at Mold, Clwyd, have held coffee mornings and collected donations in envelopes to help an orphanage in Rajahmundry.

In return for £16,000 given since 1983, they received regular reports on the progress of the children said to be in the orphanage, as well as audited accounts of how their money was being spent.

But although photographs continued to arrive, the children's case histories dried up and the Vicar of Mold, the Rev

Ian Day, asked his local MP, David Hanson, to have the orphanage checked out. His parishioners were horrified to learn from the Foreign Office that "the orphanage appears to exist on paper only".

According to Jeremy Hanley, a Foreign Office Minister, the organisation was registered by a local Indian driver who has since been receiving donations from sources in various countries.

After the investigations by the British Council division in Hyderabad, Mr Hanley advised donors not to send any more cash to the "charity".

Last night Mr Day, who said he has made the affair public to warn other donors, said that he still hoped further investigations might elicit

positive news. The address given for the orphanage is in a particularly remote part of the country and has not been visited by a British Council official.

Mr Day said: "We have got lots of pictures of children. We have got children's histories from the early years."

He said the parishioners had originally been put in touch with the orphanage by the Girls' Friendly Society of London. They had it checked twice by a representative of the Anglican Church of Southern India, who told them the orphanage was genuine and needed 100 rupees a month for each child.

Mr Day said he now had mixed feelings about the generosity of his flock. "There is a sense of pride at being part of

a community that wanted to do something so positive to help," he said. "But there is also total disappointment that they appear to have been duped. I am quite saddened by it."

He said he was uplifted by the desire of his parishioners still to help the needy. "One lady said that if she couldn't give money there, she will give it elsewhere," the vicar said.

Mr Hanson, Labour MP for Delyn, will be tabling questions in Parliament on the charity next week. He said: "My instinct is to support the local church. They raised it with me because they felt unsure of the feedback they were getting. I'm going to ask for further investigations from the Foreign Office."

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CB16

Farmers face abyss of all-out slaughter

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

DAIRY and beef farmers are staring into the abyss as they contemplate the possibility of the slaughter of the entire national cattle herd to wipe out "mad cow" disease.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, shocked the farming community by confirming that wholesale slaughter was "one of the options that is open" should there be a surge in cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), the human counterpart of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

Sir David Naish, president of the National Farmers' Union, said he could not imagine such a policy ever being necessary but admitted: "I supposed anything could be done if that is the right way to protect public health."

Nearly 100,000 cattle showing symptoms of BSE have

The total farmgate value of milk and milk products was around £3.3 billion.

The most common dairy breed is the Holstein Friesian. Among the most popular beef breeds are Charolais and Limousin, both of French origin, and Hereford and Aberdeen Angus. Small numbers of rare breeds are also reared for beef and milk.

Lawrence Alderson, director of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, said: "It is hard to see how there could be any justification for slaughtering these animals. They are mostly raised on grass and would be most unlikely to have been fed the kind of rations which caused BSE."

If compensation was paid at about £700 a head, the current rate for BSE cattle, the slaughter of the breeding stock of 5.3 million cows alone would cost the Government £3.7 billion. Other animals would not qualify for such high payments but meat industry sources suggested the total bill could amount to £7 billion.

Compensation for the culled animals would not be the end of it, Mr Sloyan said. "You would then have to restock the national herd with imported cattle. Finding 12 million suitable replacements would be a major task in itself. Even if the slaughter was limited to herds that have had BSE, the result would still be devastating. Ninety-eight per cent of all cases of BSE have occurred in dairy herds."

Alison Best, the NFU's regional adviser in the South West, a prime dairy area, said: "We must not go overboard and devastate an entire industry." But Richard Haddock, who rears 1,000 beef cattle on his farm at Kingswear, near Dartmouth, said drastic measures were needed to restore public confidence. He suggested that all older dairy cattle should be destroyed and banned from sale as beef.

The Archers was re-recorded at the eleventh hour yesterday to bring the latest BSE scare to Ambridge. Scriptwriters took the rare step of rewriting last night's episode to allow the characters in the long-running BBC Radio 4 serial to air their views on the subject. Actors were re-called to the Birmingham studio to record a new storyline.

Magnus Linklater, page 18
Leading article, page 19
Letters, page 19



Farmers at the cattle market in Banbury yesterday. More than half of all British farmers earn at least some of their income from cattle

Why agriculture is a special case

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON
WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

FEW industries other than farming have been so immune to market forces. Even a radical Conservative Government committed to the iron law of the market has done little to reduce the £28 billion a year subsidy to British farmers. Much of that comes from the European Union but the coal and steel industries never enjoyed such treatment.

Tony Fowler of the Meat and Livestock Commission said: "The case is partly strategic and goes back to the Second World War and the shortage of food supplies that continued for several years afterwards." He also cited social and economic reasons. "Rural communities would be depopulated. Without some sort of help, farmers' incomes would suffer badly and so would the rural econ-

omy." The Ministry of Agriculture endorsed the arguments. A spokesman said: "If you didn't have subsidies there would be no farming in hill areas, in the uplands such as the Pennines and in much of Scotland and Wales." The department also emphasised environmental reasons.

Nevertheless, the Government is committed to making agriculture more market-oriented but the biggest obstacle remains the common agricultural policy.

The department said: "If you moved to market forces overnight, agriculture would be wiped out not just in the uplands but in most of southern Europe. Agriculture has to be subsidised to keep it going." The argument would have sounded familiar to Arthur Scargill.

Industry says Government must foot bill if jobs go

By ANDREW PIERCE

LEADERS of Britain's £12 billion meat industry have said that the Government could face a massive compensation bill if the BSE scare has a serious impact on sales.

At a private meeting with Angela Browning, the junior Agriculture Minister, on Wednesday representatives made clear they would hold the Government responsible if there were any job losses and bankruptcies.

Meat producers fear a salmonella-in-eggs type of crisis that could cost thousands of jobs in the industry, already affected by a growing trend towards vegetarianism. Beef sales are about £4 billion, almost a third of the industry's annual turnover.

The Ministry of Agriculture paid £8.3 million compensation for enforced slaughtering

of hens after Edwina Currie, while Health Minister, said most of Britain's farmed chickens were infected with salmonella.

Feelings are running high in the meat trade, which employs about 40,000 people. The decision to delay until Sunday an announcement about the effect of BSE on

more to advise the public and our members about the virtues of British beef. But it is a real pain that every time the scare goes away the Government releases another batch of information.

"We have been left dangling in the air with the prospect of more announcements at the weekend," Mrs Browning, at our meeting, agreed to meet with us to discuss our concerns over compensation if there is a collapse in sales.

The ministry can artificially support the price of beef through intervention in the market. It can buy beef, freeze it and sell it back to the market when demand has recovered. "It is an option open to us through the common agricultural policy," a spokesman said. "Whether we would give compensation to farmers' direct has not been considered at this stage."

COMPENSATION

children has further worried producers and retailers.

The Meat and Livestock Commission is considering a one-off levy on members to fund an advertising campaign extolling the virtues of British beef. John Fuller, chief executive of the National Federation of Meat and Food Traders which represents 3,500 independent butcher's shops, said: "We will be fighting hard once

Outbreak probably started in sheep

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

BSE in Britain probably originated from sheep flocks that carried an especially resilient form of scrapie, veterinary scientists believe.

When, in the 1970s and early 80s, two vital changes were made to the procedures for producing animal feed from sheep carcasses, this particular scrapie agent proved tough enough to survive in sufficient amounts to infect cows.

The epidemic then multiplied when infection was recycled from BSE-infected carcasses, before the feeding of protein derived from both cows and sheep was banned in July 1988. Meat and bone meal from sheep carcasses had been used for cattle feeds for years

ORIGINS

before BSE appeared. The evidence is that it was changes in rendering procedures, partly to economise on energy consumption, that enabled the infective agent to survive.

Lower temperatures in the rendering process and a decline in the use of solvents to extract fats from animal bones and offal combined to cause the problem. Steam was used in the final stage of solvent extraction, which could have helped to destroy the scrapie agent present in the bones.

No official approval was needed for these changes. Scientists were aware that sheep had been suffering from scrapie, probably for centuries, but there was no evidence that it could be transmitted to humans or cows. Like BSE and CJD, scrapie is a prion disease but it appeared to pose no threat to human health.

The evidence that BSE originated from a single scrapie strain comes from the observation that the agent of BSE in all British cows appears to be identical. When injected into mice, samples of the BSE agent from all over the country produce the same symptoms after the same incubation period. This is in contrast to the variety of incubation periods and patterns of brain damage found when scrapie agent from different sheep flocks is used to infect the mice.

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Farmers may sue abattoirs

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

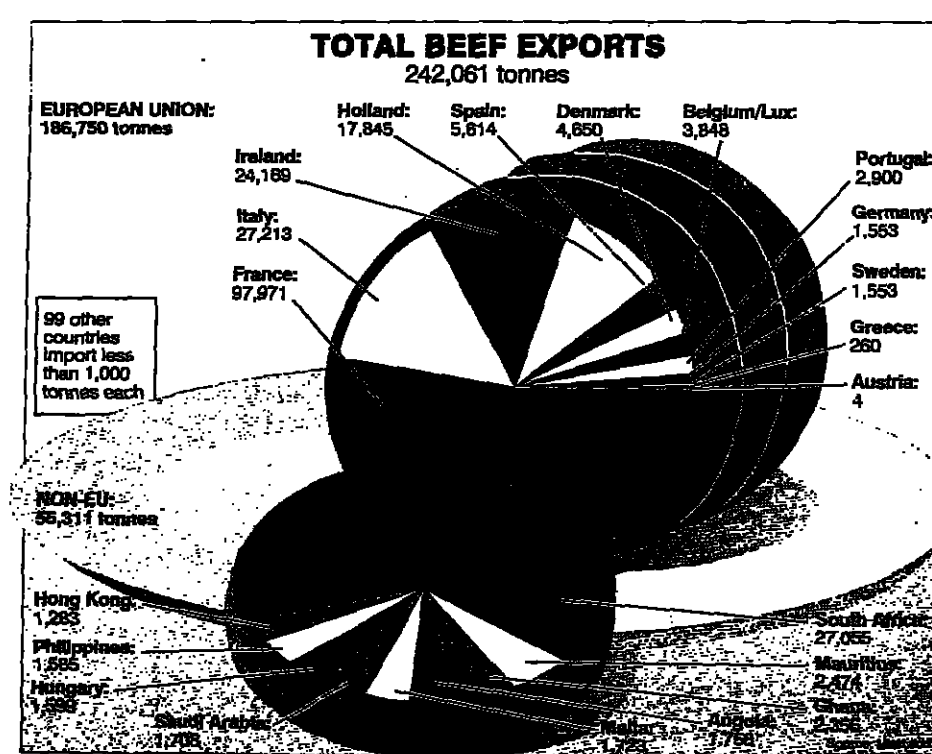
THE National Farmers' Union is considering suing abattoirs for the spread of "mad cow" disease.

The farmers' union is seeking legal advice about the chances of winning damages because sheep offal fed to cattle in the 1980s was infected with scrapie, probably the cause of BSE. However, there is usually a six-year limit on suing for damages. The union sought advice some years ago about similar action and was told it would be very difficult.

Farmers could issue writs against the abattoirs or the suppliers of the sheep meat.

Lawyers for the families of CJD victims yesterday called for a public inquiry to establish how the disease may have spread from cattle to humans. David Body, of the law firm Irwin Mitchell, acknowledged it would be difficult to sue through the courts on the strength of the evidence so far.

The Ministry of Agriculture would be the prime target for any civil action because of its role as a regulator but, Mr Body said, there was controversy over the duties to the public of a government body.



An export trade worth £520 million a year is in jeopardy after the decision by France, Britain's biggest market, to impose an immediate ban on imports of British beef. Belgium has followed suit and other countries may do likewise, threatening one of Britain's most successful exports in spite of international concern over BSE. The alarm will undoubtedly prove much harder to quell than previous scares and Britain may this time be unable to fend off demands for a Europe-wide ban. The total value of beef exports is £520 million, of which European Union countries account for £457 million.

Outside the EU, South Africa is by far the biggest destination for British beef, taking 27,055 tonnes. Although beef exports were badly hit six years ago when BSE first became a public health issue, they have climbed steadily since, more than doubling from the 1990 level of 110,000 tonnes. Exports have also been greatly helped by the devaluation of the pound since 1992. Even a partial export ban, requiring all beef to be certified as coming from a herd which has never had BSE, would have a big impact. Just over half of all dairy herds have had one or more cases of BSE since 1986.

Disaster brings business boom

FOR one group of farmers "mad cow disease" has proved to be a boon rather than a disaster (Michael Hornsby writes).

No cow born and bred on organic farms has succumbed to BSE, leading to growing interest in the beef produced by the small number of farmers who rear livestock in this way. There are only 200 organic beef producers in Britain, accounting for just 12,000 of the 3.3 million cattle slaughtered each year.

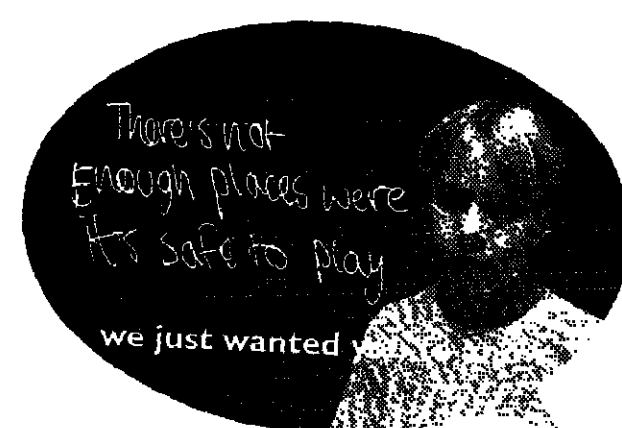
One of the biggest is Helen Browning, who keeps 250 dairy cows and produces about 150 beef cattle a year at Bishopstone in Wiltshire.

To meet organic standards, she has to observe strict rules on what she can feed her cattle. The bulk of their diet consists of forage, supplied

ORGANIC FARMING

by organically grown rolled oats and high-protein soya. Sales of Mrs Browning's beef rose by about 15 per cent last December when BSE was last in the news. "People are looking more closely at what they eat," she said. "There is no doubt that BSE has contributed to that."

Because output is lower than conventional farms, organic farmers have to charge more. Mrs Browning charges a premium of up to 25 per cent which customers are prepared to pay because they are assured of quality. But the price of organic produce is likely to mean that organic farmers will never be able to supply more than a niche market.



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Short incubation period may explain youth of victims

By Nigel Hawkes
Science Editor

THERE is no evidence that children or young people are especially vulnerable to infection with the new form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a leading expert said yesterday.

The ten cases so far identified have an average age of 27 but James Ironside, of the CJD surveillance unit at Western General Hospital in Edinburgh, said that this did not point to a greater vulnerability among the young.

"If we accept the hypothesis that these cases are caused by exposure to BSE, then if the entire population was exposed, the disease would appear first in the young because their incubation period is shorter," Dr Ironside said.

If this is correct, then as time passes older people will also start appearing with the distinctive symptoms of the new form of the disease.

Why the incubation period should be shorter in young people is not known, though it has been observed in similar diseases. In Kuru, the disease spread by cannibalism in Papua New Guinea, the youngest patient was aged five.

One possibility is simply a function of size, Dr Ironside

CJD INFECTION

said. "The nerves are shorter in children," he said. "If we assume that the causative agent has to make its way up the spinal column to the brain, it will take less time if the spine is shorter."

An alternative explanation, suggested by John Wilson, a consultant neurologist from Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, is that young people are simply more exposed to the causative agent because of their taste for fast foods, including beefburgers.

"The truth is, we don't know," he said. The new cases suggest that the infective agent can jump from cows to man, the question that will determine the number of cases is the ease with which this "species barrier" can be jumped. For years, ministers have insisted that any such jump was very unlikely; that claim must now be abandoned. But if the barrier is a high one, the number of cases might remain low.

Experiments in progress at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, might provide an answer. The team led by John Collinge has been trying to transmit the infectious agent responsible

for the disease to mice that have been genetically engineered to carry a human brain protein.

The causative agent of all the spongiform encephalopathies — scrapie in sheep, BSE in cows, and CJD in humans — is believed to be an aberrant form of the prion protein. Normally, prions are harmless proteins found on the surface of brain cells but they can be altered into a modified form which causes the brain changes seen in the disease.

The alteration of the prion (the word stands for "proteinaceous infectious particle") may occur spontaneously, may have genetic causes, or may happen when normal prion protein comes into contact with the abnormal type — as in BSE and, it appears, CJD.

While not all experts accept the prion model of CJD, it is certainly the leading candidate. One problem is that it is difficult to explain the various strains of the prion diseases by such a simple model.



No beef at home, but Amy Adams loves burgers

Burgers remain children's school dinner favourite

By Joanna Bale

FACED with the choice of beefburgers or chicken pie yesterday, nine out of ten primary pupils went for the juicy quarter pounder.

Even when one curious seven-year-old asked the headmaster, who lunched with them, what all the fuss was about, the children carried on eating as he tried to explain that "some people think beef might not be safe to eat".

Tony Hawkins, head of Fairisle Junior School in Southampton, where there are 305 pupils aged seven to 11, said: "I told them that there was a question over whether beef might be safe to eat, but they all carried on eating their burgers."

"They are too young really to understand what is going on, and they do love beefburgers. It's always the most popular choice."

Mr Hawkins, who has been headmaster at the school since 1983, said he had only received one phone call so far from a concerned parent about the scare. However, he expected it to be

one of the main topics of conversation at a parents' evening later that day.

He said: "It is Hampshire's policy to offer beef in schools, always with an alternative. Until that changes, we will have to carry on as we are. I still eat beef myself."

One parent, Julie Adams, 32, had already written requesting beef to be withdrawn. As she waited for Amy, 11, and Ashley, 10, she said: "I raised the matter some time last year, but was just told that my children have a choice if they want it."

"I don't want them eating beef, but try getting them to eat other things when there are burgers on the menu. I haven't eaten it for two years, but it's difficult to stop kids

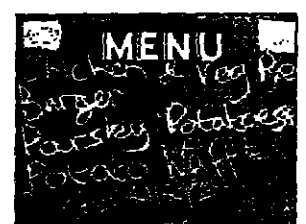
eating it when they get it at school."

Jenny Middleton, 58, who was picking up her grandchildren Claire, 10, Sarah, nine and Lucy, seven, said: "I don't eat red meat for health reasons, never mind BSE. It's a disgrace that the Government has only just warned people when they must have known there was a risk."

She said she was babysitting her granddaughters at their home that evening. "I've just had a look in the freezer to see what there is for tea," she added. "It's all burgers and mince. I'm not happy, but that's all they seem to eat."

Darren Rankin seemed unconcerned about Aaron, nine and Carly, eight, being fed burgers at school. He said: "They love them and we eat a lot of them at home. You can't spend your life worrying about something that will probably never happen. It's much more dangerous driving a car, but we still do it."

Aaron nodded in agreement with his dad and added: "Burgers are my favourite."



Sign of the times: beef was still the top choice

Councils react with instant ban to protect pupils

By Stephen Farrell

SCHOOLS around the country banned beef from their menus yesterday as caterers accused health ministers of spreading confusion over BSE.

Up to 10,000 schools, one third of the total, have either removed beef from dinner tables or limited its use, the Local Authority Caterers' Association claims. Derbyshire, Bedfordshire, Cleveland, Croydon, Nottinghamshire and Berkshire county councils and Birmingham City Council all announced an immediate or delayed beef ban, which is already in place in Cambridgeshire, Kent, East Sussex and Ealing. The ban was also announced yesterday in Gloucestershire and all 255 schools in Bradford.

All primary, nursery and special schools and ten secondary schools in Manchester have withdrawn beef. Durham, Cumbria, Calderdale, Islington and Sunderland authorities joined those who plan to review their policy, while others are leaving the decision to individual schools.

Pat Fellows, chairman of the caterers' association, which represents 70 authorities, said councils awaited the outcome of weekend discussions on BSE and children. "Parents, pupils, teachers and caterers are confused and want public confidence restored," she said. "In the

SCHOOL MEALS

meantime our advice will be unchanged. We suggest that local authority caterers should provide customers with a wide choice of menu items so that there are always alternatives to beef."

The largest supplier of school meals, BET Catering Services, said that the decision to withdraw beef was at the discretion of local authorities. "The majority of the authorities to which we provide services have already removed beef from the primary school menu, and those that haven't are giving it serious consideration," a spokeswoman said.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities planned to relax its guidelines on beef on Wednesday, but withdrew the decision after the government's announcement. Graham Lane, chairman of its education committee, said guidance recommending a ban or offering options on menus would stay in force "for the foreseeable future".

"The government has confused everyone," she said. "It has now given the impression that all beef is dangerous. I don't think it meant to do that, but that is what has come out. Many authorities feel puzzled the line has changed so dramatically. I think most people feel we may have to keep beef off menus completely."

Euro-ban on beef

Continued from page 1
and the European Commission's agriculture spokesman said that France had broken EU rules by failing to give notice of the ban.

But the French agriculture ministry defended the move by citing two European directives which, it said, permitted such action in "cases of doubt about the sanitary quality of a product or animal".

In the past three months France has tightened health controls and cross-border inspections, but resisted demands from farmers for a complete ban on British beef. These were renewed before the embargo was announced yesterday when Claude Allo of the French National Cattle Federation said: "The English are in danger of exporting to us the problem they have already stirred up in English public opinion. There is only one thing to be done: stop these imports as a matter of urgency."

The Agriculture Minister Philippe Vasseur responded with an announcement that he

was suspending imports of British beef and live cattle "to provide all the necessary guarantees to French consumers pending the full results of European scientific experts in this matter".

Belgium also announced a ban on imports, which total about 8,000 tonnes a year and are worth about £12 million, while The Netherlands said it was suspending imports of live cattle, beef and beef products from Britain until the Commission made its definitive ruling on Monday.

There was one crumb of comfort for the Government when Denmark dismissed the other countries' bans as "a very violent reaction".

At Westminster, however, the Government came under attack from Labour which accused ministers of procrastination and delay. Tony Blair called for "a categorical statement" that the scientific advice was that it was "entirely safe" to carry on feeding beefburgers to children. "The clearer and better those statements, the sooner public concern will be allayed," he said.

But the Prime Minister stopped short of giving that categorical assurance, saying only that there was no scientific evidence to suggest children were more at risk than adults.

Despite such assurances, more schools joined the ten thousand that had already abandoned serving beef. Ten authorities announced bans at all or some of their schools yesterday and another five are to review their policies.

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Nurse accepts £50,000 for race prejudice

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A PAKISTANI-BORN nurse has won £50,000 from a National Health Service trust over allegations that she was the victim of racial discrimination and harassment.

Nargis Firdous said she had been hounded for more than 12 months by her white boss at the Bethlem psychiatric hospital in Denmark Hill, south London.

Mrs Firdous, 43, a registered mental nurse earning £27,000, also complained yesterday that Unison, her union, had not taken her complaints seriously. After reaching an out-of-court settlement, Mrs Firdous, of Streatham, south London, said: "The money has compensated me to some extent but my losses are much more than £50,000. It was not an issue of winning or losing, it was a matter of principle."

Mrs Firdous, who trained in Pakistan but has worked as a nurse in Britain for 20 years, brought her case with the help of the Commission

for Racial Equality after being sacked in 1994.

She was appointed manager of a ward of difficult psychiatric patients at the hospital in 1991 and inspectors complimented her on her energy, commitment and experience. In 1993 a new line manager was appointed and began to try to have Mrs Firdous removed, claiming she was "unsafe and dangerous".

Mrs Firdous said yesterday that a white colleague who replaced her for six months was not accused of being "unsafe or dangerous" even though in one 24-hour period there were 12 fires on the ward. On another occasion a patient was absent without permission and subsequently committed suicide, but the white manager was not blamed.

Mrs Firdous took the Bethlem and Maudsley NHS Trust and Michol Fisher, her manager, to an industrial tribunal. After 11 days she accepted the £50,000 settlement.



Nargis Firdous yesterday outside the offices in London of the Commission for Racial Equality

Blunkett moves to upstage government plans

Labour seeks to double sixth-formers' workload

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

SIXTH-FORMERS should spend almost twice as long in the classroom to try to match the achievements of their continental counterparts, Labour said yesterday in measures designed to trump government plans to be announced next week.

The typical A-level student has about 18 hours of lessons a week, compared with 30 for courses in France and Germany. Labour wants to bridge the gap with new programmes to broaden the curriculum.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, announcing the *Aiming High* policy document, said pupils might spend part of the extra time on supervised use of high-tech learning packages, rather than formal lessons. Bryan Davies, Labour spokesman on further and higher education, said students were more extended at GCSE than at A level, particularly if sixth-formers took a limited number of subjects. Sixth-formers tak-

ing A levels or vocational qualifications should learn "core skills" required by employers, such as communication, advanced numeracy and the use of information technology.

But David Summerscale, headmaster of Westminster School, where sixth-formers average more than three As at A level on six hours' tuition a week per subject, said students needed time for independent study, to master learning for themselves. David Hart, of the National Association of Head Teachers, said Labour risked appearing to tell teachers and students "that the nanny state knows best".

Tony Evans, headmaster of Portsmouth Grammar School and chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, welcomed the scope for breadth at A level but added: "It is, of course, a fallacy to believe that the more time you spend on something the better the results."

Several of Labour's propos-



Blunkett announced Labour policy document

vocational courses by calling them Applied A Levels. The diploma would be awarded for a minimum of two A levels or a General National Vocational Qualification and success in the core skills.

In another echo of Sir Ron's plans, high-flyers could take modules of university courses while still at school.

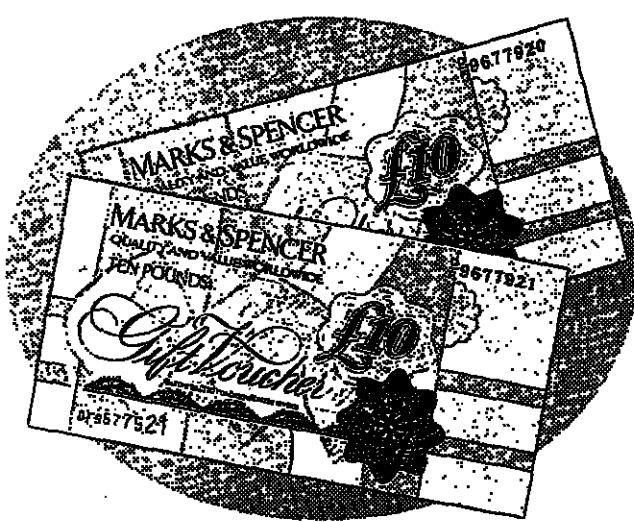
Pupils aged under 16 might spend a day or half a day at further education college on job-related topics, without sacrificing the national curriculum. Mr Blunkett said. He admitted that colleges would not be falling over themselves to take in disaffected 14-year-olds who currently spent their time playing truant.

Peter Smith, of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, gave warning that the scheme could become an "excuse for licensed truancy". But John Dunford, of the Secondary Heads Association, said the courses could motivate young people.

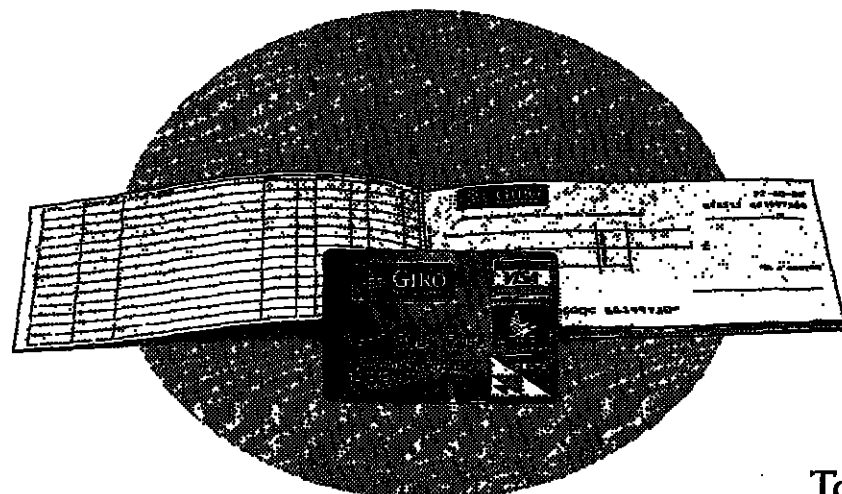
Education, page 36

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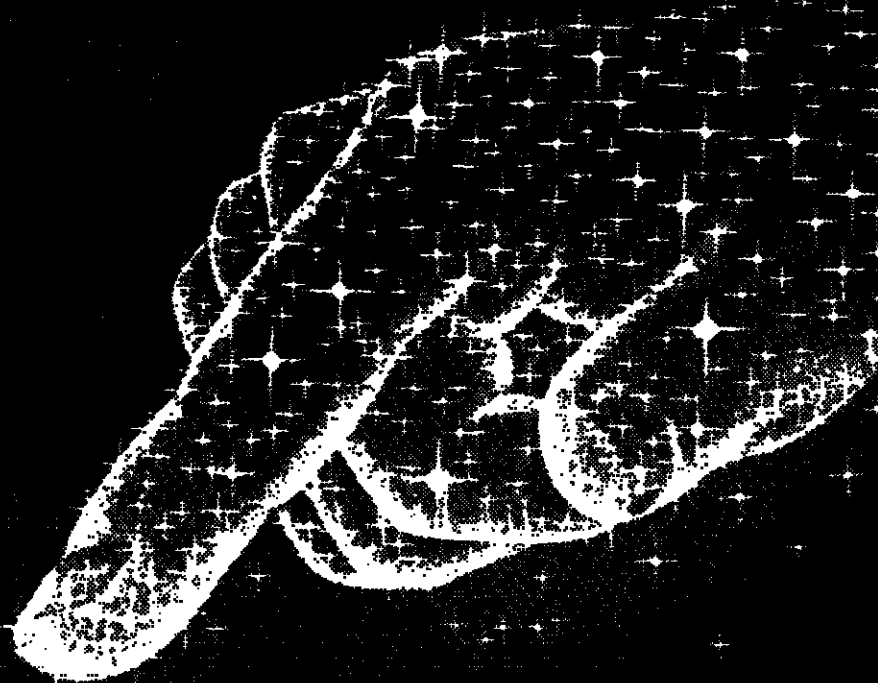
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Women-only classes in driving safety break equality law

BY ADRIAN LEE

A GARAGE that runs car-safety classes for women only was told yesterday it was breaking the law by excluding men. The move, which will have implications for a variety of organisations, angered women's groups.

Local authorities, clubs and police who run safety, car maintenance and fitness classes could all be affected. In a statement, the Equal Opportunities Commission said women-only classes breached Section 29 of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975. Anyone running them could "lay themselves open to a legal challenge".

The Department for Education and Employment confirmed that classes for women only broke the law. A spokeswoman said the law was not clear on organisations that implied by the titles of classes that men were not welcome, as there had been no test cases. Organisations could not get round the law by offering

separate classes for men and women.

The dispute began when Sandcliffe Motors, a Ford dealership in Ilkeston, Derbyshire, sought clarification on a promotion which included cost-price petrol and cheap car-servicing for women drivers. During discussions, the Equal Opportunities Commission advised the garage that its women's workshops, run for five years, could also be illegal.

The RAC, which has run "women's workshops" for 100,000 female drivers over the past five years, said it would review its classes but described the advice from the commission as "nonsense". Its workshops, begun after the murder of Marie Wilks on the M50 in 1988, were unashamedly aimed at women. Men were welcome but, a spokesman said, "We feel it is important to keep the word 'women' in the title so women don't get put off." A spokes-

woman for Sandcliffe Motors said: "We were told we were breaking the law and the EOC said it could challenge them itself if we went ahead. It is ridiculous."

The classes featured safety videos and a lecture by a crime prevention officer. "Women don't want men there," said the spokeswoman.

Fiona Brown, of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, set up after Miss Lamplugh, an estate agent, was abducted, said: "It is most unhelpful. These classes are addressed to people who want to feel more secure when driving alone."

Anne Peck, of the Centre for Independent Transport Research, which has studied women's attitudes to safety while travelling, said: "Women ought to have a choice. Some women have had experiences which deter them from attending classes where men are present. A number of studies have shown there is a place for women-only spaces."



Lifeboatmen struggling with Queenie, the rapidly growing 7ft conger eel that they have helped to return to its spawning ground in the Azores

RNLI berth aids an expectant eel

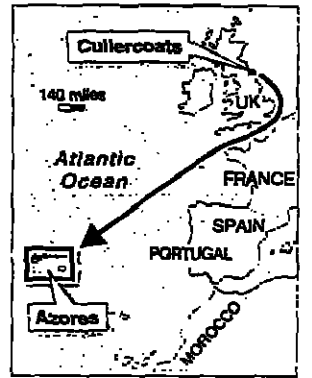
BY A STAFF REPORTER

A LIFEBOAT crew has come to the aid of a 7ft conger eel. The 70lb fish, named Queenie, was given a lift at the start of its journey to the Azores, spawning grounds of the conger eel, by the crew of the *Edmund and Joan White*.

The eel had been at the Dove Marine Laboratory at Cullercoats, Tyne and Wear, for six years after being caught in a fisherman's nets. When it outgrew its tank the eel was taken to Tyneemouth Sea Life Centre, before staff realised the reason for its rapid growth was that it was full of eggs.

The only place it could safely release them is in the deep spawning grounds of the Azores 4,000 metres below the surface, where the pressure will force the millions of eggs from its body. Spawning will be Queenie's last task because it will die after releasing the eggs.

However, the eel had to be given a flying start by the lifeboatmen. After a bit of a struggle to lift it into the boat, they took the fish a mile



offshore and slipped it back into the sea where it will join other migrating eels on a journey that will last until late spring.

Justin Measures, Sea Life's senior aquarist, said: "If we had just put her in the sea from the shore there is a good chance she would have been washed back. But the lifeboat gave her a fighting chance of making it to the Azores in safety."

Raymond Taylor, the lifeboat secretary at Cullercoats, said: "We were happy to do a good turn for the Sea Life centre because it has always helped us with fundraising."

Cambridge dons oppose tobacco firm's £1.6m gift

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A £1.6 million donation may be turned down by Cambridge University because of a dispute about the ethics of accepting tobacco company profits.

Senior members of the university are said to be "wobbling" over the proposed donation from BAT to set up the Sir Patrick Sheehy Professorship of International Relations, in honour of its former chairman. The money would also provide two post-doctoral posts, scholarships for overseas students and bursaries.

Academics opposed to the sponsorship hope to force a vote of all 3,000 full university members if the money is accepted at a university council meeting next term. It has been recommended by the general board of the faculties but strong opposition emerged at a private debate this week.

Earlier this month Oxford dons criticised a £350,000 donation from Dr Gert-Rudolf Flick, the grandson of a prominent Nazi industrialist, to set up a professorship at Balliol College.

Sir Keith Peters, Regius Professor of Physics, told the private meeting of Cambridge academics that, although such a large contribution would be helpful, the moral cost would

be too great. Professor Timothy Cox, of the Department of Medicine, said: "This is a very major and complex issue. My position as a doctor is a very strong one against smoking and all of us in the medical school would err on that side."

Sir David Williams, the Vice-Chancellor, welcomed BAT's offer: "I had the privilege of working with Sir Patrick Sheehy in the successful effort to bring the Royal Commonwealth Library to Cambridge. We are delighted to be able to honour him in this way. He has made an outstanding contribution in the field of public relations."

Nick Forbes, the Student Union president, said: "While we might not like where the money is coming from, beggars cannot be choosers."

One in eight street lights in Cambridgeshire is to be turned off to save £160,000, the county council decided yesterday. But a £25,000 donation from the city's council will allow Cambridge to remain fully lit, appeasing students who said the measure would jeopardise their safety. The county council also voted to curb roadbuilding, bridge maintenance, gritting and new pedestrian crossings.

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Howard to reveal third annual drop in recorded crime

By STEWART TENDLER AND RICHARD FORD

RECORDED crime in England and Wales fell by about 2 per cent last year, boosting the Government's claim to be curbing criminal behaviour.

The third successive annual drop will be hailed by Michael Howard as evidence that, for the time being, the cycle of rapidly rising crime has been broken. The figures will show, however, that offences rose during the second half of the year after a significant drop in the first six months.

Ministers will be anxious that the trend has not continued into this year, and there will also be ministerial concern at a rise in recorded violent crimes.

The figures, to be published next week, will show a further decline in vehicle crime, theft and household burglary. The decline in burglary is attributed, in part, to police activity such as Operation Bumblebee. The Home Secretary believes increased use of technology, particularly the

spread of closed-circuit television, is an important factor.

There is concern, however, that the decline in crime may have ended. Recorded crime fell 5 per cent in 1994 and 1 per cent in 1995, having reached a record level in 1992. One Whitehall source said: "It has plateaued out. It is getting much harder to produce the falls that the Government wants to see."

The recorded crime statistics are based on the number of offences reported to police. An alternative view is given by the British Crime Survey, based on interviews with a representative sample of 10,000 people: it has consistently shown a much higher rate than the police statistics.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said last night: "Recorded crime figures must be treated with caution."

"The fall in crime could be because police recording

methods have changed and fewer people are reporting crime because they do not think the police will catch anyone." He added that the underlying trend could be starting to rise again.

The number of arrests declined last year although some individual forces showed large rises in the number of people detained. In Northumbria, which Mr Howard is expected to visit soon, arrests were up 25 per cent and overall the force has shown a drop in crime for the past five years.

Durham is understood to have recorded a drop of about 11 per cent in overall crime and a 23 per cent decline in violent offences. The Metropolitan Police will also report a further fall.

Merseyside and Cambridgeshire are expected to report large increases in crime. Officials at the Home Office attributed the rise in Cambridgeshire to a new recording system.



Stella Rimington believes that the renewed terrorist campaign presents a grave security risk

New head of MI5 must tackle IRA terror threat

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

DAME Stella Rimington hands over her post as Director-General of MI5 next week as the renewed IRA bombing campaign poses a grave challenge to her successor.

Stephen Lander, 48, whose appointment as Dame Stella's replacement was announced last November, is expected to devote much of his time to surveillance of suspected IRA members on the mainland and protection of possible targets for assassination. Government officials who played a crucial role in formulating John Major's latest peace initiatives in Northern Ireland are known to be under 24-hour armed police guard.

The most recent respite from IRA bombs, after the Docklands explosion last month and the three subsequent bombings, has given no grounds for believing that the renewed campaign was merely a brief flurry to accelerate the peace process. Military bases and other facilities that appeared on the list found at the Lewisham home of



Lander: former director of counter-terrorism

Edward O'Brien, the IRA bomber who was killed in the Aldwych bus explosion, remain on heightened alert.

Dame Stella, 60, who succeeded in persuading Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to allow MI5 to help the police in combating organised crime, has found herself in the past few weeks devoting most of her energies towards countering the new IRA threat. Mr Lander, who is a former director of Irish

counter-terrorism at MI5, will be expected to launch a renewed effort to forestall any further mainland attacks.

Dame Stella is acknowledged both within the Security Service and outside to have been a highly successful director-general. By adopting a public profile, giving lectures about the service and its aims and publishing brochures, she has helped to remove longstanding suspicions about MI5's role in Whitehall.

Her next job has not yet been announced. She had been considered for the post of Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, to succeed Lord St John of Fawley, but narrowly failed to be chosen. She is known to want a job outside government but may be offered a new security role in the Cabinet Office.

A detective who helped to spearhead the secret war against the IRA after being severely maimed in a terrorist bombing died from cancer yesterday. Chief Superintendent Frank Murray, 51, refused to quit the force when he lost a leg, an arm and an eye in the attack 20 years ago.

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Stuffed.



THE CARINA FRONT SALES TOYOTA

Man bailed over death in Spain

A man was remanded on bail by Bow Street magistrates yesterday accused of killing a 14-year-old girl in a road accident in southern Spain seven years ago.

Peter Dawson-Ball, 42, of St Martin's, Guernsey, is charged with the manslaughter of Lizanne Pina, whose family lived on Gibraltar, in 1989, within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court.

Charges dropped

Three men arrested in connection with an arson attack last month on the car of Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, at his home in Norton sub Hamdon, Somerset, will not face charges, Avon and Somerset police said.

Tanker to go

The damaged supertanker *Sea Empress*, which split 72,000 tonnes of oil on the South Wales coast last month, is to be moved next week to Belfast for repairs. The Harland and Wolff shipyard beat off international competition for the contract.

Six life terms

Scott Vowles, 24, a barman, of Bermondsey, south London, who murdered Judy Newell, 35, and her five children by setting fire to their fourth-floor flat, was given six life sentences at the Old Bailey. The Newell family had not been his intended target.

Beggar jailed

Andrew Sophocleous, 28, a beggar who had been under the influence of drink and drugs, was jailed for four years by Southwark Crown Court. He attacked a passer-by in Camden, north London, with a broken bottle after his plea for change was refused.

Show thawed off

A matinee performance of a skating spectacular at the Apollo theatre, Oxford, was cancelled after vandals tampered with ice-making equipment. The 2in-thick ice, which began to melt, was refrozen to allow the evening performance to go ahead.

Potatoes dominate starchy options

By ROBIN YOUNG

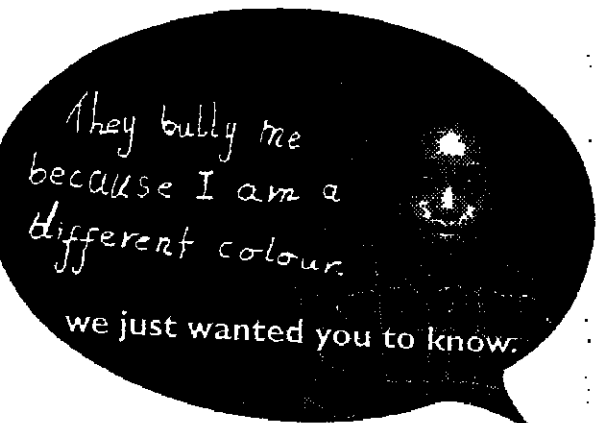
STARCHY foods are the basis of a healthy diet, and though pasta and rice have gained popularity, potatoes are still the favourite British choice, accounting for half the nation's vegetable consumption.

Retailers are obliged to identify the variety of the potatoes they offer for sale. Potatoes are the only fruit or vegetable to which this rule applies, so customers should check each variety's suitability for different purposes, because they vary widely.

Promotions include: Asda: Bell's whisky 70cl for £11.99, sparkling Chardonnay 75cl for £3.99, chicken tikka 400g for £1.49. Budegens: cucumbers 55p each, Scottish smoked salmon 200g for £3.99, Sara Lee

WEEKEND SHOPPING

chocolate gateau 340g for 99p; Co-op: Dolmio hot and spicy lasagne 350g for £1.09, Müllerice 200g for 29p, Melow Birds coffee 100g for £1.49, Harrods: turkey breast 100g for £1.65, free range loin of pork 1kg for £6.49, Iceland: turkey cheese burgers 4 for 99p, Mediterranean fish bake 300g for 99p, Marks & Spencer: frozen Black Forest gateau 540g for £1.99, four hot cross buns 65p, fresh salad 600g for £1.99, Morrison: fresh ham & mushroom tagliatelli 340g for £1.29, Onken Bioprot peach yogurt 500g for 79p, Safeway: Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 75cl for £2.29, rump steak 1kg for £7.99, skinned haddock cutlets 1kg for £6.79, Sainsbury's: assorted biscuits 400g for 69p, scampi in crispy crumb 340g for £2.65, steak cut chips 1816g £1.49, Somerfield: Jaffa oranges 1kg for 99p, watercress 75g for 75p, traditional sausages 454g for 79p, unsmoked back bacon 510g for £2.49, Tesco: wholewheat deluxe muesli 1.5kg for £1.99, shepherd's pie 709g for 99p, Chilean white wine 75cl for £2.79, Waitrose: Empire apples 1.25kg for £1.49, large avocados 75p each, Belgian truffles 200g for £2.95.



VAT tribunal refuses to allow fanciers any exemption after ruling that birds do all the work

Pigeon racing is no sport of Queens, says taxman

By PAUL WILKINSON

BRITISH pigeon fanciers — a group including the Queen — were told yesterday that their passion is not a sport. Because the bird does the work, the VAT-man has decided pigeon racing is merely a hobby and does not qualify for the tax exemption applied to other sports.

The decision, handed down by a Customs and Excise tribunal in Bristol, has staggered representatives of Britain's 80,000 fanciers, who include Jack Duckworth from the television soap *Coronation Street*. They point to a host of other activities that do qualify, including pool, angling and yoga.

John Brown, president of the North of England Homing Union, said: "I don't see how they can regard angling as a sport. You just sit there holding a stick over a bit of water. Pigeon racing is far more demanding. People take it very seriously. We all talk to our birds and a few wives feel



Jack Duckworth of *Coronation Street* fame and the Queen are both enthusiastic pigeon fanciers



their men love their pigeons more than them."

In all 114 activities are exempt from VAT, from aikido to yoga. Greyhound racing is not, but horse racing and motor sports are. Among the less strenuous events regarded as sports for VAT purposes are

ballooning, baton-twirling and bowls.

Fanciers meet in two weeks to decide whether they should take their case to the European Court of Justice. They believe they have a good case as pigeon fanciers in Ireland, Holland and Belgium are

exempt. The case was brought by the Royal Pigeon Racing Association, whose patron is the Queen, after a change in the law allowed sports club members to claim thousands of pounds in VAT refunds on membership fees, backdated to 1990. British bird fanciers pay about £30,000 VAT on annual subscriptions.

Major Edward Camilleri, the association's general manager, argued that pigeon racing was physical enough to be classed as a sport. Preparation for a race involved feeding, cleaning, driving and lifting birdcages weighing up to 40lb.

In some sports recognised by the VAT commissioners — including gliding and yoga — there was little physical activity. However, a Sports Council representative suggested that sport should "encourage people in acquiring physical skills and undertaking physical effort". The council does not recognise pigeon racing.

The tribunal ruled: "The individual must be taking part in the sport, which we inter-



Flying start: breeders say pigeon racing is as physically demanding as other sports for the rival owners

pret to mean the main sporting activity and not some ancillary activity. We appreciate individuals do take part in some important steps, such as recording the time of arrival, but this is not the main sporting activity, which is the race itself. The activities of the

owner are purely incidental." Bill Stokoe, a VAT specialist with the accountants KPMG, said: "The law has gone mad. No official could convince me that fanciers do not regard pigeon racing as a sport."

A racing association spokesman said: "Obviously we are

disappointed, particularly when you consider some of the activities that are classed as sports." Mr Brown, 59, a retired council official from Washington, Tyne and Wear, and a pigeon racer for 50 years, said: "To say this is not physical enough to be a sport

is ridiculous. At the end of race day I'm a physical wreck. Members can spend six hours a day on their birds. They have to be fed and groomed and their lofts cleaned out. It's very physically demanding."

Leading article, page 19

Gummer wrong to let wetland become car depot

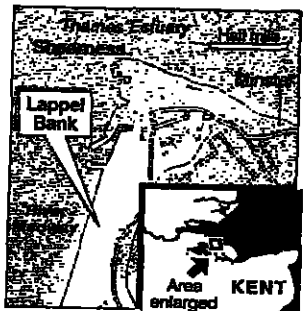
By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN acted illegally in allowing part of a wildlife haven to be concreted over for a car depot, according to a ruling from the European Court of Justice yesterday. The court's Advocate General, whose opinions are usually agreed by the full court, found Britain guilty in what could be a landmark decision.

Lappel Bank on the River Medway near Sheerness in Kent was part of a "wetland of international importance" protected under EU law, and home to rare birds, the Advocate General said. It was wrong for the Government to have excluded half of the bank from the Special Protection Area listing under the European Union's Birds Directive, thereby favouring economic interests over the interests of the environment, he said.

In 1993 John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, decided that some of the bank, which is home to species such as the curlew and grey plover, was needed to support the expansion of Sheerness. Half of the bank has now been turned into a site where cars imported from Japan are stockpiled.

News of the decision came as an alliance of conservation groups unveiled a report claiming that nearly every aspect of the British environment was deteriorating. The second Green Gauge survey of data, published by a coalition of green groups including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the World Wide Fund for Nature, showed that species such as the skylark and song thrush



were vanishing because their traditional habitats were being destroyed.

Rural land was being built on at the rate of more than 11,000 hectares a year, while vehicle use continued to rise, contributing to the problem of climate change. Meanwhile, overfishing was leading to the loss of traditional stocks such as haddock and cod.

But it was not all bad news, the report's authors said. The water quality of many rivers had improved within the past ten years, and the level of awareness of transport issues, such as roadbuilding, had increased largely thanks to protests such as that against the Newbury bypass, it was claimed.

The environmentalist Jonathon Porritt told a news conference to launch the report, which the coalition hopes to introduce to schools: "There is no cause for celebration despite a considerably higher level of public awareness and political dialogue about environmental issues. Too many of the indicators are moving in the wrong direction."

"Our environment is getting worse, even the Government's figures say so. There must now be immediate action to stem the tide of environmental degradation in the UK."

Sea eagles approach the test of survival

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

CONSERVATIONISTS trying to reintroduce the white-tailed sea eagle to Britain believe that the first chicks reared in the wild will start to produce young of their own this year or next.

There are now ten breeding pairs in Scotland, all of them introduced as chicks from Norway, and the first eggs of the season are beginning to hatch. In the next three months the project team from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will know whether they have beaten the record of seven chicks successfully reared in one year.

The reintroduction programme began in 1975 when chicks from Norway were released on the island of Rhum. 32 birds were released on the island over 11 years. The second phase of the project started three years ago and so far 26 young birds have been released into the wild at a secret site in the extreme north of Scotland.

A total of 46 chicks have hatched in the wild but none



Sea eagle chicks were reintroduced in 1975

of those chicks, which take at least five years to mature, has raised young of its own, the crucial proof that the Scottish population of sea eagles can support themselves.

Last year a wild-bred bird teamed up with a released sea eagle and ornithologists believe they could breed this year for the first time.

Kevin Duffy, sea eagle project officer with SNH, says he is optimistic that their will be 20 breeding pairs in Scotland by 2003. During the next century Britain's largest bird of prey, with a wingspan of almost 10ft, may be a common sight in the Highlands. The last indigenous female sea eagle was shot on Shetland in 1918.

The story of the sea eagles will be told tonight at 8pm in BBC1's *Operation Survival*, in Scotland only.

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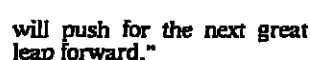
6

PETER RIDDELL

BY NICHOLAS WOOD AND ALICE THOMSON

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

He promised a detailed



"Britain is heading for a clash with Europe. We have different views of Europe. If they cannot be reconciled, then the time will surely come when Britain has to consider much more radical alternatives."

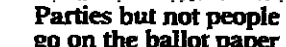
Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, teased Mr

Mr Cook declared: "The truth is, like so much else in the White Paper, the negotiating objectives are not drawn up by any calculation of the interests of the 56 million people of Britain, but by very fine calculation of what is necessary to fit the prejudices of a few dozen Tory MPs."

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

For example, if the Ulster Unionists won 60 per cent in Belfast South, the SDLP 19 per cent, and the Democratic Unionists 18 per cent, the Ulster Unionists would get three seats, the SDLP one and the Democratic Unionists one. However, this being Northern Ireland, it may not be as smooth as that. Ministers are looking at the possibility that parties unable to reach a 20 per cent threshold in any seat may still qualify if they get, for example, 14 or 15 per cent.

The aim is purely to ensure that some of the fringe loyalist parties that might not be successful in the wider election at least get on the forum.



IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Northern Ireland ministers and the Prime Minister; debate on the European Environment Conference; Government's week-end debate on lottery beneficiaries in west Suffolk.

In the Lords: Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, second reading;

Criminal Legal Aid (Scotland) (Prescribed Proceedings) Amendment Regulations (Advice and Assistance (Assistance to Represented)) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations.

TODAY in the Commons: Dogs (Fouling of Land) Bill; Regulation of Diet Industry

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

The Tories are surprisingly upbeat, despite not having

Bill Jones, 54, a partner in a local public relations firm, said it would be a test of nerves. "It will take a long



Mr Blair's chair with six voters in front of the press had a slightly artificial air to it, as if each of the converts had rehearsed. Mr Jones was concerned about small businesses

Later, in Tamworth, Jimmy James, 44, the Tory candidate welcomed Mr Blair's visit but added: "He won't have answered questions for local businessmen on the minimum wage, social chapter and trade union influence."

MINISTERS appear to have headed off a crisis in the

The amendment was inserted in the Bill after a government defeat in the Lords. Roger Freeman, the Public Services Minister is expected to announce the new move when he opens the Second Reading of the Bill in the Commons.

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Labour's aim would be to bring eye tests more in line with prescription charges, from which the over-65s are exempt. Party sources say that

Members of Labour's health team point to the £110 million that will be saved by ending tax relief from private health insurance for the elder-

Labour's health team is now having discussions with the medical profession and the Association of Optometrists over precise details of the plan. The optometrists argue that the cost of restoring free eyesight tests for the elderly would be more than offset by long-term savings in treatment.

This is neither the
time nor the place
to buy a PEP.

Exercises raise spectre of humiliation for China, say expelled Communist activists

'Black Hands' of Tiananmen study poll preparations

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN TAIPEI

DISSIDENTS

TWO men condemned by Peking as "Black Hands" behind the Tiananmen Square uprising were in Taipei yesterday watching Taiwan prepare for tomorrow's presidential elections.

Liu Binyan, 71, and Su Shaozhi, 65, were long-time party members who were expelled for advocating democratic reforms which threatened party rule. They are in Taipei with a group of democratic activists which includes Chai Ling, the "commander in chief" during the six weeks of demonstrations in the spring of 1989, and Li Lu, her deputy commander. Everyone in the delegation lives abroad.

Mr Liu was for 30 years China's most famous investigative journalist, whose readers looked to him for exposés of official corruption and injustice. He was twice ejected

from the party and spent many years in detention until he left China in 1987.

He is regarded by the party as the single most important influence on the rebellious students because of his years of inner-party democratic activism. Now based near Princeton University in New Jersey, his courage despite persecution accounts for his continued inspiration to Chinese democrats.

"What Peking fears here is independence," Mr Liu said. "If Taiwan became a real country it would be an obvious, concrete loss by the party, something they couldn't hide or explain away."

Most Chinese know nothing about what happens in Taiwan, and they were so brain-

washed for years that names like Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang still make them anxious. There is also a kind of ignorant superficial nationalism in China, which has nothing to do with making the country better. Its believers insist that Taiwan, like Tibet, must not be torn from China.

Mr Liu favours an eventual link between Taiwan and the mainland. "People here have an island mentality — rather narrow. They would benefit from some sort of relationship with China, but with a democratic one. That might be 20 to 40 years away. Unification of any kind now would only strengthen the regime."

Su Shaozhi, once a leading party intellectual, was until his dismissal in 1987, the director of the State Council's Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought Institute. The party expelled him for pressing for ideological reform in the direction of Western-style democracy. He escaped, and now lives near Mr Liu.

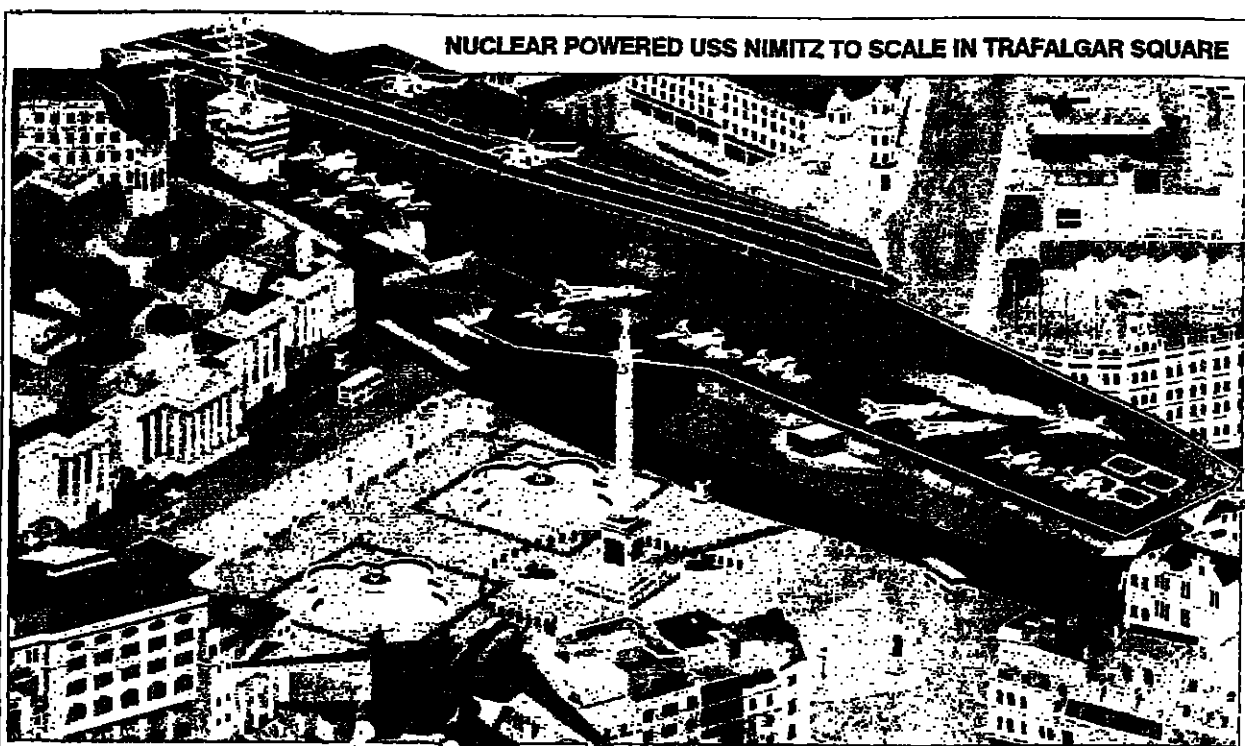
"I just telephoned a friend in Peking," he said yesterday, "and asked him what the party really feared in Taiwan. He said it was Mr De." Mr De was the code word for Democracy used in 1919 by university students demanding that to save itself from imperialism, China needed democracy.

"These military exercises are intended to horrify Taiwan," Mr Su said. "It's what collapsing totalitarian governments tend to do... At first, the party got a lot of support for this action near Taiwan because many Chinese, including democrats in the exile community, believe in reunification more than they believe in democracy."

According to Mr Su, the leaders made two mistakes. "Taiwan has not surrendered and the US came to help. They never expected [President] Clinton to do something so decisive. So they have a problem now: a rebellious province with an army."

Mr Su thinks that Peking's failure to intimidate Taiwan has already had serious effects for the regime. "They have lost the hearts of the people of Taiwan; I have friends in Taiwan who were in favour of some sort of reunification. Not any more. And just as in Tiananmen, they have isolated China again, alienating their friends in the West and causing fear of Chinese hegemony all over East and South-East Asia."

Letters, page 19



NUCLEAR POWERED USS NIMITZ TO SCALE IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

USS NIMITZ	AIRPOWER	ARMAMENTS
Length: 1,092ft Crew: 3,200 Max speed: 35 knots	18 F14 TOMCAT Length 61ft 2in Span 49ft 11in Weight max 44,000lb Max speed Mach 1.8 Armaments 20mm Vulcan cannon, Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles	PHALANX Three 20mm close-in weapon system
QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 Length: 983ft Crew: 1,000 approx Passengers: 1,870 Max speed: 32.5 knots	22 F16 HORNET Length 56ft Span 37ft 6in Weight max 44,000lb Max speed Mach 1.8 Armaments Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles	15 AS INTRUDER Length 54ft 6in Span 53ft Weight max 58,600lb Max speed 685mph Armaments Up to 32,000lb bombs, Bulldog, ARM and Harpoon missiles
LARGE UK BASED FERRY Length: 580ft Crew: 215 Passengers: 2,500 Max speed: 22 knots	5 EAG INTRUDER Length 54ft 6in Span 53ft Weight max 58,600lb Max speed 685mph Armaments 32,000lb bombs, Bulldog, ARM and Harpoon missiles	SEA SPARROW Length 54ft 6in Span 53ft Weight max 21,884lb Max speed 145mph Armaments 2 Mk 46 torpedoes

A floating piece of America on the front line

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE USS *Nimitz*, which is expected to arrive near the Taiwan Strait today, is part of the premier fleet of American aircraft carriers which act as central hubs for the forward presence of the United States Navy.

Deployed for the first time in May, 1975, she is one of seven carriers in the *Nimitz* class, which are powered by two nuclear

reactors and four geared steam turbines. With a beam of 252ft, they are the largest vessels in the American fleet, capable of supporting and operating as many as 85 aircraft against airborne, floating or shore targets.

Supporting a ship's company of 3,200 and an air wing of as many as 2,480, *Nimitz* can carry a full load of up to 97,000 tons. In effect, she is a floating piece of America and has numerous facilities, including a chapel, butcher, barber, hospital, fire station, chilled drinking water plant, bars, games rooms, and a television at every corner.

Capable of spending 90 days at sea, the vessel can distil 100,000 gallons of fresh water a day and provides for the needs of everyone, from the lowest rating to the commander. The question of nuclear weapons being aboard is one the Pentagon is quick to avoid.

Peking condemns US weapons deal

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA yesterday attacked new American arms sales to Taiwan and denounced a resolution by the US Congress to help to defend the Nationalists. The condemnation came as Peking continued its military exercises just two days before Taiwan's first direct presidential elections tomorrow.

The latest broadside by Shen Guofang, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, came after Washington said it had approved the sale of arms, including Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. A Taiwan request for diesel-powered submarines was turned down.

Mr Shen criticised the House of Representatives, which this week passed a non-binding resolution calling for America to defend Taiwan if China launched an attack. The Senate is expected to support a similar resolution. Mr Shen described the resolution as "detestable" and said it was an attempt to obstruct the reunification of China and Taiwan.

He noted that American arms sales to Taiwan had intensified tension in the region and had complicated the situation.

Mr Shen said the US bore "unshakable responsibility for exacerbating tension". He claimed that Washington was always "scoffing" those who engaged in weapons proliferation so it was very irresponsible of the United States to "sell advanced weapons to a sensitive area at a sensitive time".

ARMS SALES

Yesterday the USS *Nimitz* aircraft carrier was steaming into the South China Sea towards waters off Taiwan. It forms part of an American naval task force, the largest Washington has assembled in the region since the Vietnam War, in response to China's show of muscle in the Taiwan Strait.

Despite Mr Shen's words, there are signs that the United States and China mean to keep high-level contacts alive in various areas. There are plans for Chi Haotian, the Defence Minister, who has recently revived the slogan of the need to "liberate" Taiwan, to visit America next month, and Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, is due to confer with Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, in The Hague on April 21.

□ Taipei: A 41,266-tonne container ship rammed into a naval supply ship at Hsinpin Pier in south Taiwan's Kaohsiung Harbour yesterday, almost slicing it in half. No one was injured in the accident.

Military supply ships have been crisscrossing Kaohsiung harbour since China started its war games in the Taiwan Strait. Harbour officials said the supply ships were loading food and weapons destined for Taiwanese islands close to the coast of China. (AFP)

Satellite launch boosts Indian defence

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

INDIA yesterday successfully carried out the final developmental launch of its home-made PSLV rocket, carrying a satellite into orbit and placing South Asia's superpower in the top league of nations engaged in advanced space technology.

It was a milestone for India, marking the end of the 4,150 million rupee (£78 million) development programme of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and clearing the way for research into a new generation of rockets. It puts India in a position to compete in the lucrative business of launching satellites for other countries.

Scientists from the Indian Space Research Organisation cheered as the 230-tonne launch vehicle blasted off flawlessly from the Sriharikota range on the east coast north of Madras. India has already launched nine satellites and is planning to launch another eight in the next four years.

Such advances make neighbouring Pakistan nervous and are fuelling fears of an arms race between the two nuclear powers.

The decision by the United States to go ahead with the sale to Pakistan, approved last year, of \$368 million (£241 million) of arms sales, including aircraft and missiles, will intensify these fears. There had been speculation that the transfer would be postponed after reports that China had sold nuclear technology to Islamabad, violating American non-proliferation laws. India lobbied in Washington against the sales.

India's armed forces are seeking substantially increased defence expenditure to modernise and develop indigenous capability. Nearly two months ago India test-fired a long-range version of its Prithvi surface-to-surface missile, which is capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The Defence Ministry last year embarked on a ten-year plan to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers.

The Government recently unveiled Arjun, a 58-tonne, \$300 million Indian-built battle tank to replace Russian-made T72s. It will go into production next year. India has also produced a prototype of a light combat aircraft, which will eventually replace Russian-built MiG21s.

The new American arms deliveries to Pakistan may represent a diplomatic and psychological victory for Islamabad, but they leave the Islamic state overwhelmingly outclassed by its neighbour in conventional defence strength.



A Taiwanese soldier mans a 50mm machinegun on an American-made tank near Taipei yesterday

Carrot and stick tactics fail to frighten voters

FROM DAVID WATTS IN TAIPEI

WITH Taiwanese frantically campaigning for presidential elections and blithely ignoring Peking's threats, the mainland must reassess its information-gathering on the island, the Foreign Minister of Taiwan said yesterday.

Fredrick Chien said that the clamour for democracy and vigorous media coverage of a rapidly changing society had led Communist Party leaders to make "a big, big mistake" in their assessment of the effect of their attempts at intimidation. They had resorted to carrot and stick tactics.

Yesterday the carrot was again in evidence when Peking let it be known that it would accept anyone the Tai-

ELECTIONS

wanese chose as their president. "They don't want to eliminate the possibility of repairing the damage," Mr Chien said. "They are tightening the noose and then loosening it again." He added that Peking would not accept the new president as a head of state. "They think that this is a local election."

It appears that the Chinese strategy of either frightening the Government into cancelling the elections or depressing the percentage of the vote for President Lee Teng-hui has backfired.

The indications are that it will boost the level of support for Taiwan's first native-born president.

Why Mrs Mandela must be tolerated

FROM R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG

AFTER the wounding Mandela divorce, the real question is what happens to Winnie Mandela now? The case has severely damaged whatever hopes she may have had of inheriting President Mandela's political mantle.

The revelation of the terrible Calvary that Mrs Mandela inflicted upon her husband, the African National Congress's chief icon, is not softened by her inability to contest the allegations against her or by her husband's damning judgment that while she suffered under apartheid, "many other women suffered far more". Until now, this has been her alibi for everything. Equally, Mrs Mandela's

last-minute attempt to turn the case into a crusade for women's rights sits ill with her financial dependence upon her husband, not to mention her conviction for kidnapping.

Mrs Mandela's financial prospects also appear dim. It emerges that she has had something like £500,000 from her husband since 1990 — virtually all of it the fruit of donations from well-wishers — but also that she is going through money as fast as deposited royals in Britain.

She derives a monthly income of £2,700 from investments but her expenditure is seven times that. Although Mr Mandela will doubtless make her a generous settlement,

nobody expects it to be long before she has spent whatever he gives her.

As it is, only repeated interventions by her husband have got her off the hook on the numerous occasions when she has been hauled before the courts for bawling over debts. Future brushes with the law seem certain and she is less likely to be rescued.

Mrs Mandela is far from finished, however. She is a prominent member of the ANC's National Executive Committee and President of the ANC Women's League. She has used that position to embarrass the movement by taking up populist causes against the leadership and

will doubtless now feel more free to do so.

These positions give her sufficient political leverage for it to be very imprudent for ANC politicians to risk taking her on. Those who did so over the affair of the murdered Stompie Moeketsi have all suffered and Thabo Mbeki, the First Deputy President, for example, takes great care to stay on the right side of her.

Moreover, the ANC seems unwilling to disown her, not only because it is half afraid of her but because she is, finally, theirs and her name and dramatic figure still strike deep chords with those who remember her from the brave days of the struggle.



Mrs Mandela: still has support

'Mother of Nation' accused of running criminal gang

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

HUMILIATED by courtroom details about her infidelity and spendthrift ways, Winnie Mandela's woes continue to pile up with her now accused of running a criminal syndicate.

During hearings at the Supreme Court in Pretoria, Dougie Holthausen, a retired policeman, told how Mrs Mandela was in charge of a gang of criminals who committed robberies on her orders. Giving evidence at the trial of Colonel Eugene de Kock, a former police commander who is facing 121 charges of murder and fraud, Mr Holthausen told how the President's former wife was to have accompanied four would-be robbers who were ambushed and killed by police in 1992. He said she withdrew from the trip at the last minute. Mr Holthausen named Tisoetso Leballo,

Mrs Mandela's former driver, as a fifth member of the team who escaped the attack only to be killed later, allegedly on the orders of Colonel de Kock.

During the late 1980s Mrs Mandela, a convicted kidnapper still held in high regard by many South Africans as the "Mother of the Nation", surrounded herself with young thugs in the Mandela United Football Club. Jerry Richardson, the "coach", was sentenced to hang for the murder of Stompie Moeketsi, 14, who had earlier been taken to her home.

President Mandela said during divorce proceedings this week that he could expose "more serious" dirty linen than the one act of adultery mentioned. Within hours two of her bodyguards appeared in a court on murder and attempted murder charges.

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Hezbollah threat prompts alert on Lebanon border

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

A STATE of alert was declared yesterday in Jewish towns and settlements along the border with Lebanon as pro-Iranian guerrilla leaders threatened rocket attacks in retaliation for Israel's promised tough response to the killing of six Israeli soldiers this month.

Wednesday's renewal by Hezbollah of suicide bombing, which originated in response to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, has left the situation more tense than at any time since July 1993, when Israel's Operation Accountability killed 130 people and turned nearly 250,000 Lebanese civilians into refugees as they fled north.

Overshadowed by the recent spate of Islamic suicide bombings against civilian targets inside Israel and the resulting Sharm el Sheikh anti-terrorism summit, the war of attrition being fought against Israel under Syrian eyes in occupied southern Lebanon is threatening the Middle East peace process from a different, but equally dangerous, perspective.

In addition to the normal complications which have made Lebanon a quagmire for Israeli forces in the past, the latest crisis is all the more explosive because it comes just two months before an Israeli election in which security is the key issue, and while Washington is trying to bind the fragile 29-nation coalition formed at Sharm el Sheikh with a follow-up meeting in the United States.

Even before a 26-year-old bomber blew himself up on Wednesday after giving the passing Israeli convoy a provocative salute from the roadside, Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, was under heavy domestic pressure to defy American calls for restraint and to improve his

image by ordering widescale retaliation.

"The Prime Minister knows that Hezbollah are deliberately trying to provoke a heavy-handed reaction, but there comes a point in an election campaign where he has to respect the views of his electorate," one Israeli official said. "It is not so much revenge that is being demanded as action to preserve the security of our soldiers in Lebanon."

While the world has grown bored with Lebanon, the last



Ali Qashmar, 20, the suicide bomber whose attack killed an Israeli officer this week

active Arab-Israeli warfront, every Israeli appears to have a relative or friend serving inside the nine-mile deep buffer zone. Every time that Israel Radio begins playing sombre music and rumours of a new attack circulate, the anxiety among the Jews is palpable.

Mr Peres made clear yesterday that Israel would respond to the latest attacks at a time and a place of its own choosing. Binyamin ben-Eliezer, one of his leading campaign aides, was less guarded. "It cannot be 'bang' and we are

done. We must hit a bull's-eye," he said, without elaborating.

An editorial in the right-wing *Jerusalem Post* demonstrated the intensity of pressure Mr Peres is facing from his main opponents, the right-wing Likud, to throw recent restraint to the wind.

"To talk about a political solution in Lebanon is fine. All wars end with a political solution. But to accommodate Syrian sensibilities and American daydreams and presidential elections by tying the hands of the Israeli Army is unacceptable," the paper argued.

All Israelis hope that Peres's vision of peace with the Arab world will materialise before 2000. But they do not relish having Israeli soldiers serve as sitting ducks until that time.

The Prime Minister, whose poll standing was badly damaged by the recent suicide bombings in Israel, said: "We will do everything required to relate to the situation as it exists in the field."

However, as the 1978 Operation Litani demonstrated, and the 1982 invasion underlined at great human cost, a ground push deep into Lebanon or even as far as Beirut was not capable of ending terrorist attacks across Israel's northern border.

According to Israeli defence sources, current ideas range from attacking guerrilla headquarters in Beirut to air raids against Iran, the main supplier of Hezbollah finance and arms.

"We keep our right to retaliate," Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah chief, said at a Beirut news conference yesterday. "The only way not to touch their [Israeli] settlements is not touching our civilians and people."



A wine-keeper shows off a bottle of Georgian wine from Stalin's 450-bottle collection of rare European and local vintages, which was unearthed from a cellar in Tbilisi more than four decades after the Soviet dictator's death. Most Russians

Stalin's cellar opened

would probably shudder at the thought of unearthing the hidden remains of Stalin's cellar (Richard Beeston writes). However, the secret is not a grisly

legacy of his brutal rule, but a reminder that the tyrant was also a wine lover.

The collection will be put on display in a museum in the Georgian capital. Its

discovery could help the rapid rehabilitation of Stalin both in his native Georgia, where many consider him a national hero, and in Russia, where resurgent Communists recently celebrated his birthday and praised his achievements.

Yeltsin hardens Russian line on Nato

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday warned Javier Solana, the visiting Nato Secretary-General, that Russia would take a tough line against the alliance for proposing to extend membership to former Soviet bloc countries.

Mr Yeltsin told Señor Solana that Yevgeni Primakov, the newly appointed Foreign Minister, had not been forceful enough in stating Russia's strong objections to Nato expansion.

"They say he [Primakov] talked to you too mildly so I

will be tougher than him in making our position clear," said the President, who once issued a warning that Nato expansion would ignite "the flame of war" across Europe.

Señor Solana would not say after the meeting how forceful the Russian leader had been, but said that the two sides had restated their opposing views on the subject.

"The enlargement of Nato was a decision taken in 1994," he said, referring to the applications made by 12 East and Central European states to

join the 16-nation alliance. "We are working steadily towards it and we are not going to change course."

Nato has been working hard to assure the Russians that they will not be excluded from a central role in shaping European security and that the alliance's expansion into Eastern Europe does not represent a threat against Russian interests.

The Russians have signed up to Nato's Partnership for Peace programme and after some hesitation also sent

peacekeeping troops to serve alongside Nato forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, with less than three months to go before presidential elections and with the Communists leading in the polls, Mr Yeltsin must be seen to be taking a firm line with Nato, which is regarded with great suspicion by most Russians.

Despite the West's solid support for Mr Yeltsin's re-election campaign, Washington and its allies have made clear that they are not willing to compromise on Nato.

WORLD SUMMARY

Briton is seized in Somalia

New York: An unidentified Briton was among five United Nations aid officials abducted in Somalia over an alleged dispute with a local driver (James Bone writes).

The Briton, an employee of the UN Children's Fund, was seized along with colleagues from America, India, Sudan and Nepal when they arrived at Mogadishu airport on a humanitarian mission.

UN sources said the five appeared to have been kidnapped by a driver who had a grievance against Unicef because it had stopped renting his vehicle last year.

Papandreou leaves hospital

Athens: Andreas Papandreou, 77, the former Greek Prime Minister who hovered near death for four months in hospital, defied all odds and returned home yesterday with his young wife Mimi beside him. Boisterous supporters swamped the car of the founder of the Pasok Socialist Party, cheering and throwing flowers. He waved feebly while holding on to life support tubes that will be hooked into machines at home. (Reuters)

Aznar secures alliance deal

José María Aznar, Spain's Prime Minister-in-waiting, whose Popular Party (PP) won recent elections, but without a majority sufficient to form a Government, has ratified his first pact with prospective allies (Tunku Varadarajan writes). Convergence and Union, the Catalan nationalists, has agreed to the PP appointing the parliamentary Speakers in return for seats on important committees.

Bougainville truce ends

Port Moresby: Papua New Guinea ordered its troops back into battle against secessionists in Bougainville after ending a ceasefire in operation since September 1994. The Bougainville Revolutionary Army has waged a conflict in the mineral-rich island province for about seven years over sharing profits from a rich copper mine. (Reuters)

Paradise lost

Manila: Shangri-La, an international luxury hotel chain, is to fight a court ruling that gave a small restaurant near Manila exclusive rights to the fabled name because it registered it first. (AP)

Neo-Nazi leads police to fifth victim's grave

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HANDCUFFED and surrounded by a dozen policemen, a 27-year-old neo-Nazi serial killer yesterday led the state prosecutor to the secret grave of his fifth victim.

One of the victims of Thomas L — German law forbids the printing of his full name until the trial begins — was a 23-year-old woman who was stabbed 91 times for wearing a "Nazis Out" badge. The Essen prosecutor confirmed that the man had confessed to five killings. He was arrested

after the shooting of a neo-Nazi defector.

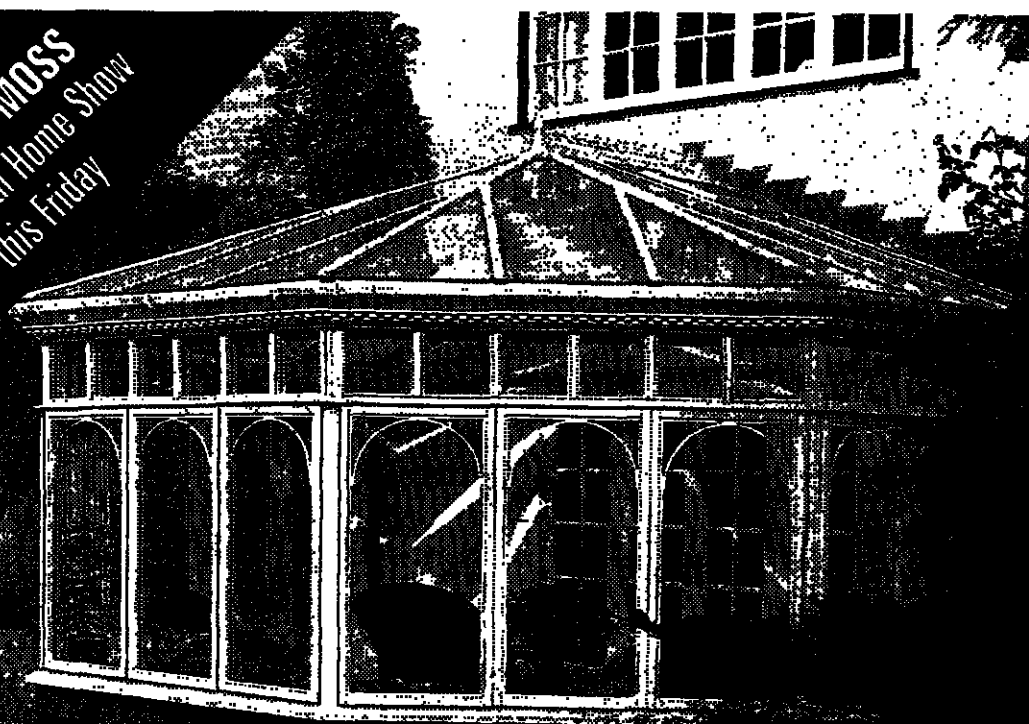
In Thomas L's flat police found a fully-armed rocket launcher, pistols, ammunition and the automatic rifle used to kill the defector.

Thomas L claims that he was carrying out orders transmitted by Odin, the Germanic god of war.

Four held: Four far-Right extremists were arrested yesterday in Magdeburg on suspicion of shooting a Sudanese man in the face.

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US needs missile defence system, say Republicans

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

ACCUSING President Clinton of neglecting America's security, Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich yesterday unveiled legislation to develop and deploy by 2003 a national defence against rogue states' ballistic missiles.

"Right now the United States has no defence, and I repeat no defence, against ballistic missiles, and if it's left up to the Clinton Administration it will stay that way," said Mr Dole, the Senate leader who will be Mr Clinton's opponent in November's presidential election.

Mr Clinton "would rather give the money away on foreign aid than use the money to defend America and that's a very big difference in our two views", Mr Gingrich, the House Speaker, said.

The two Republicans were

clearly seeking electoral advantage, but they were also addressing the real threat that certain renegade Third World nations may soon pose as they acquire weapons of mass destruction and advanced missile technology.

In Fulton, Missouri, earlier this month, President Clinton urged the West to develop anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defences, calling the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons to countries like Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya "the single most awesome threat of modern times".

Ronald Reagan, the former President, first floated the idea of building an impenetrable space-based shield to protect America from nuclear attack in 1993 when he launched the Strategic Defence Initiative, or "star wars", programme.

More than \$30 billion (£19 billion) was spent on research over the following decade, but before a single new missile defence weapon was deployed the Soviet Union collapsed and the incoming Clinton Administration killed the programme.

The new Administration began working instead on a more modest ground-based defence system. This has not been a priority partly because it does not consider the threat imminent, partly because of financial constraints, and partly because the deployment of such defences is banned by the 1972 ABM treaty with the former Soviet Union.

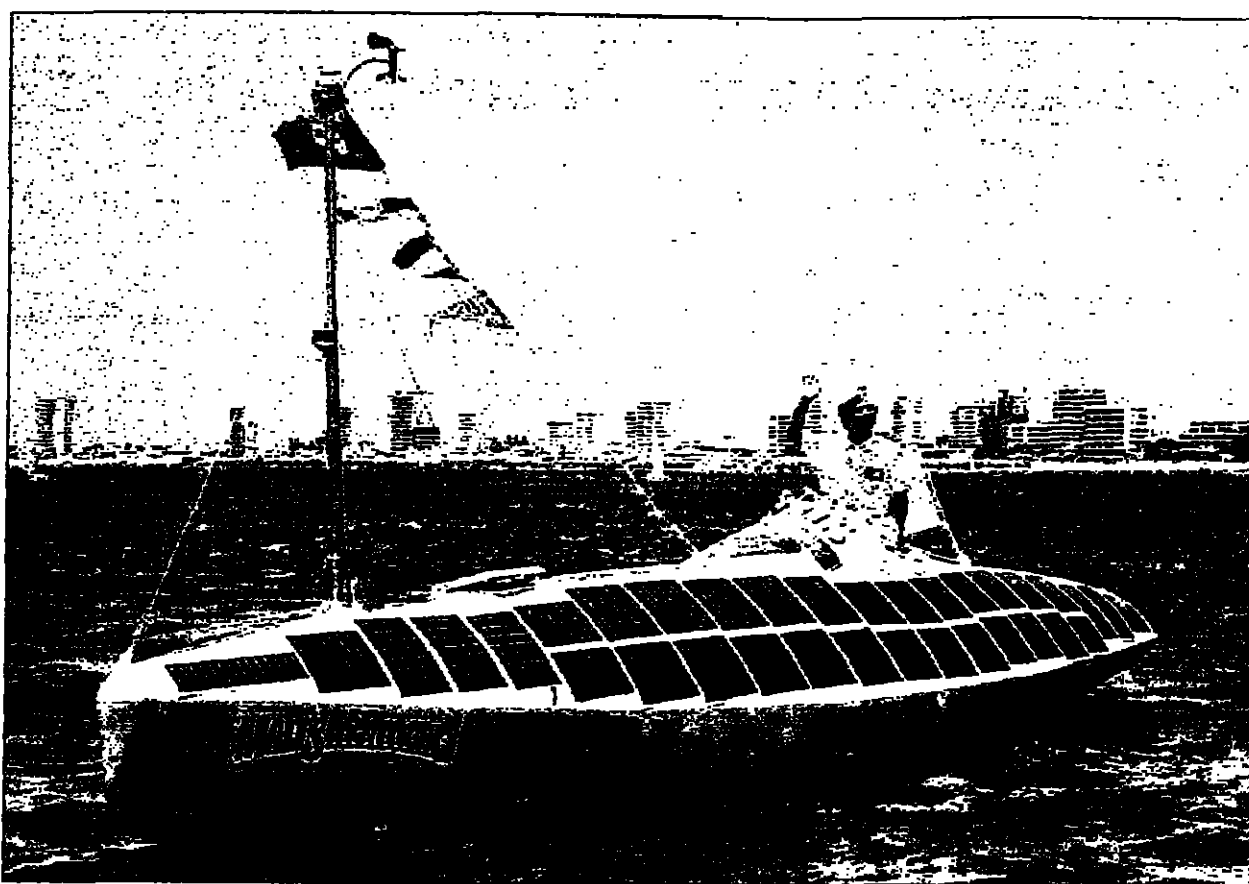
However, the Defence America Act that the two Republican leaders unveiled yesterday would mandate "the deployment by the end of 2003 of a national missile defence system capable of providing a highly effective defence of US territory against limited, unauthorised or accidental ballistic missile attacks".

The legislation instructs the Defence Secretary to produce cost estimates and a plan for deploying the system within a year. The interceptor missiles could be ground-based, sea-based or space-based, and space-based sensors known as "Brilliant Eyes" would detect incoming ballistic missiles.

The Bill urges the President to enter negotiations with Moscow to amend the ABM treaty to permit the deployment of such defences, but suggests the United States should abrogate the treaty if those negotiations had not succeeded within one year.

The ABM treaty was designed to deter nuclear attacks by upholding the principle of mutually assured destruction, but the Bill argues that "the United States and Russia should welcome the opportunity to reduce reliance on threats of nuclear retaliation as the sole basis of stability".

Mr Clinton would probably veto the Bill, but in doing so would expose himself to further Republican attacks on an issue, national defence, that has long been considered a Democratic weak point.



Kenichi Horie, a Japanese explorer, sets out from Salinas in Ecuador in his solar-powered boat made out of 27,000 recycled aluminium beer cans. He plans to sail to Japan in what he hopes will be the world's first solar-powered crossing of the Pacific Ocean (Giles

Warm beer cans sail west

Whiteall writes). Equipped with a tiny fridge and 120 cans of beer (one for each day at sea), Mr Horie set off on the 10,000-mile voyage. The 31ft Malt's Mermade has 130sq ft of solar cells. On

a good day they generate 1.5 kilowatts of electricity, topping up two rechargeable nickel-hydrogen batteries. One battery drives the boat's motor, the other the fridge, a radio, the lighting and a

video recorder. Mr Horie crossed the western Pacific from Hawaii to Japan in 1985. He has also sailed twice round the world in more conventional craft and crossed the Pacific in the world's shortest ocean-going sailing vessel, measuring 9ft 2in.

'Vampire' chills the blood in Miami

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

WHEN police arrived at the crime scene they had never seen carnage like it. Lifeless victims — 69 in all — lay strewn across the yards of two homes in Sweetwater, a Hispanic neighbourhood in south Miami. However, it was a Miami massacre with a difference — a case perhaps for Ace Ventura, Pet Detective.

The victims were all animals — goats, chickens, geese and ducks. The killer, say police, and a local zoologist, was a large dog. Wrong, say local residents: it was the chupacabras, a vampire-like predator whose name means "goat-sucker" in Spanish.

For the past six months the hideous, bloodsucking beast with an oval head and bulging red eyes, part reptile, part insect, part UFO, has supposedly been terrorising the central mountains of Puerto Rico. After the slaughter in Sweetwater the chupacabras has established a place in Miami makebelieve.

It may sound like something out of *The X-Files* but it has gripped more than just the imagination of Hispanic Miami. For those who believe in the chupacabras, the fear is real. In some cases the attack on livestock has caused serious economic loss.

Authorities are taking the killings seriously, up to a point. A specialist has investigated the deaths, and a county commissioner has called for a police inquiry.

Chupacabras has aroused great discussion — some of it less than serious — on the Internet, where it has its own home page. It has become big business with T-shirts and a chupacabras sandwich.

The interest has been fuelled by a number of accounts from seemingly credible witnesses. At least 15 claim to have had a close encounter with the monster, and one woman said that it jumped like a kangaroo and smelt like sulphur.

As for the Sweetwater slayings, Mr Magill found that the bite marks were "classic canine punctures from dogs".

As for the vampire theory, he said: "Contrary to the popular belief, all the animals were full of blood."

Green crusader threatens President

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

BOB DOLE begins campaigning in California today, but there is another candidate in next Tuesday's Golden State primaries: the White House fears more.

His name is Ralph Nader, a veteran crusader for consumer rights. Though Mr Nader will be nominated for President by California's tiny Green Party, this high-profile 62-year-old activist could siphon enough votes from Mr Clinton to make Mr Dole squeak home in the one state the President must win to retain the Oval Office.

Indeed Mr Nader represents such a serious potential threat to Mr Clinton's re-election hopes that Democratic heavyweights have been privately begging him to reconsider, but to no avail. Mr Nader is as disgusted with Mr Clinton as he is with the



Nader: could siphon votes from Clinton

Republicans. "I'm getting calls from members of Congress and all sorts of emissaries, but I'm in this campaign to stay," he insists.

California is so important to Mr Clinton that he has visited it 23 times since taking office, channelled huge sums of federal money its way, and appointed Californians to top administration jobs. Having irretrievably lost much of the South and West he cannot be re-elected without California's 54 electoral college votes — a fifth of the required total — and has already begun advertising there.

Hostage freed by car crash

FROM REUTERS IN HONG KONG

A TRAFFIC accident proved lucky for a Hong Kong kidnap victim — she was spotted in the boot of a stolen taxi after the locked lid opened in the impact of the collision.

The accident helped to save 35-year-old travel agent Yeung Chai-chi who had been abducted by two kidnappers, the *Apple Daily* and other newspapers said yesterday.

The taxi came to a halt when it hit a container lorry. The lorry driver spotted a wriggling hand and then saw a woman in a pink dress with her head masked in tight, and her arms and legs bound with adhesive tape.

He reported it to police, who sent a helicopter team to chase the car and rescue her. Police detained one suspect.

Wary Clinton faces pressure to keep soldiers in Bosnia

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON, having promised Republicans that he would withdraw American troops from Bosnia-Herzegovina by the end of the year, is facing increasing pressure from international officials to maintain a force in the Balkans after the deadline is past.

The Administration is now searching for a solution that will appease the factions on the ground and international negotiators while at the same time ensuring that Mr Clinton does not lose political capital to Congress before the presidential elections in November.

At the insistence of the United States, the Nato implementation force of 60,000 peacekeepers is scheduled to leave the region by the end of the year. The White House insisted yesterday that all

20,000 American soldiers would depart within nine months. Britain and France have said that once America leaves they will follow suit. However, Carl Bildt, the international civilian co-ordinator for the Dayton peace accord, has said it is critical that a peacekeeping force remain in Bosnia after the departure of Ifor, the multinational Nato force.

"Refugee return is a two-year plan. Reconstruction will take much longer than one year," he said. "Almost everything depends on a feeling of overall security for which some kind of military presence will be required."

At the same time, a Pentagon intelligence report released this week said that the prospects for peace were dim and added that without eco-

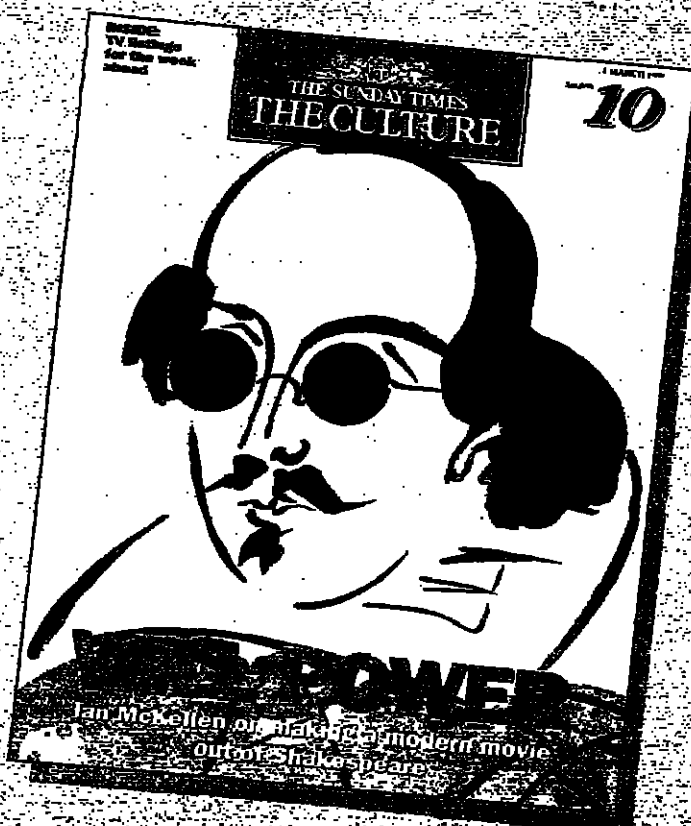
nomic aid and a political renaissance the country was likely to slide back into conflict as soon as Nato withdrew.

Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and other allied foreign ministers are expected to make a decision over Bosnia when they meet in Berlin in June.

Envoys stoned: Rebel Serbs shouted abuse at Madeleine Albright, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, and stoned her motorcade when she visited Vukovar which is being returned to Croatian rule after more than four years. Reporters said that Ms Albright cut short a walk round Vukovar's marketplace after she was mobbed by a crowd shouting "bitch" and "fascist". (Reuters)

THE SUNDAY TIMES TRANSFORMING SHAKESPEARE

Ian McKellen's stunning and provocative film of Richard III, which opens next month, is set in the 1930s. In *The Culture* on Sunday, McKellen writes about the making of the movie — and why the Bard himself would approve



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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Rosemary Righter reports on a rare exhibition of imperial Chinese masterpieces

A freezing morning in New York — so cold that every twig in Central Park has been coated with ice and sunlight turns the trees into a diamond forest. At the eastern edge of the park, the Metropolitan Museum is closed to the public, as it always is on a Monday. Inside, giant vases of forsythia fill the entrance hall with Chinese imperial yellow. Just beside them, somebody bends with needle and thread over a huge red banner appliquéd with purple Chinese characters, stitching last-minute repairs before it is hoisted over the museum's facade. There is a palpable excitement, even among the press registering for the preview of one of the rarest, and most obstacle-strewn, exhibitions the museum has ever mounted: *Splendours of Imperial China*.

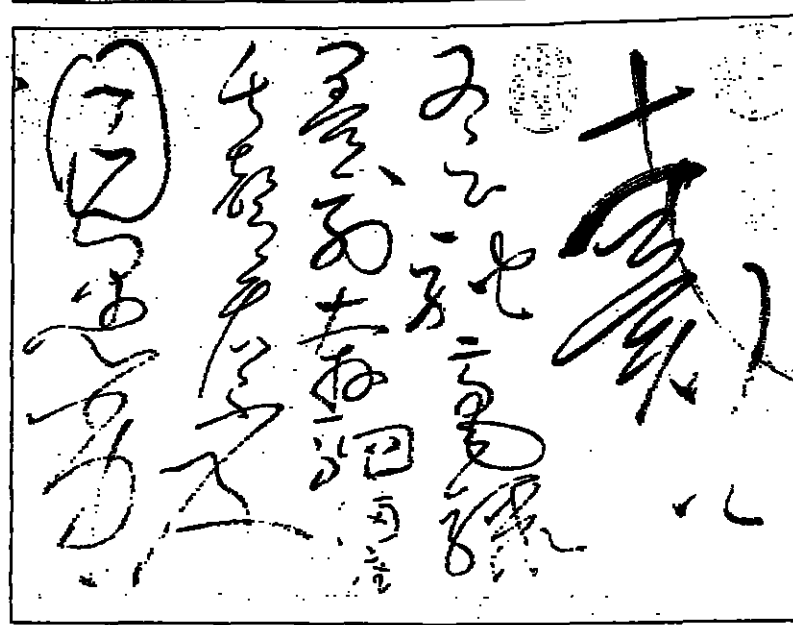
The Imperial Mandate of Heaven, in its millennial artistic manifestations, is about to descend on Manhattan. For the first time in 35 years, more than 450 of the imperial treasures from the National Palace Museum in Taiwan have been allowed to leave the island for a year-long tour of America. On view in New York are consummate masterpieces from a collection of more than 600,000 items, accumulated by Chinese emperors over a thousand years and spirited out of the Forbidden City in Peking in 1933 just ahead of the advancing Japanese Army. No finer Chinese art survives anywhere.

The opening of any great exhibition at the Metropolitan is an event in the New York social calendar, a celebration of the huge power and energy of American private patronage of the arts, an occasion for jewels and the kind of evening dresses almost never seen off the catwalk on this side of the Atlantic. But not even a scarlet and gold cheongsam could long divert the eye from 8th-century calligraphy darting, as the monk whose brushwork it was, wrote, "like a flock of birds from trees"; or from Wu Chen's ethereal bamboo paintings, completed in 1350 as an instruction manual for his young son; or from the immemorial pallor of a celadon lotus bowl from the 12th-century imperial kiln at Ju-chou, which lasted only 25 years but produced porcelain that has never been matched for purity of line and delicacy of glaze.

Years ago, in Taipei, I met the late Han Lih-wu, one of the three men who, in 1933, spirited 20,000 crates of paintings and calligraphy, rare books and other objects through the great gates of the Forbidden City and across Tiananmen Square to the trains that would carry them to Shanghai. This was the first halt on their 7,500-mile, 16-year odyssey to the



Above: 15th-century portrait of the Yung-lo Emperor. Top right: jade chimera from the Han dynasty (206 BC to AD 220). Bottom right: Hui-su handscroll, dated 777



Forbidden treasures

remotest reaches of war-torn China and ultimately to a safe haven. But the decision to ship them out of harm's way was never forgiven by the Chinese Government, which branded Han a war criminal.

In near impossible conditions the crates were moved, and moved again, sometimes only minutes before Japanese bombs destroyed their resting places. Some were shipped westward up the Yangtze in barges to Chungking and Loshan, some hauled over the Ch'ing Ling mountains into Szechuan. The latter journey took more than a year in blizzards and such torrential rain that roads

were washed out and bridges destroyed, forcing the team to haul their irreplaceable cargo across rivers on makeshift rafts.

Even when the crates found a temporary refuge in remote temples or caves, fire and white ants were an added hazard.

Finally, in 1949, the crates left the Chinese mainland for Taiwan in the final panic of the rout of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists by the Communists. Barely seaworthy vessels slipped out of the Yangtze under Communist guns and across mined sea-lanes. Yet when they unpacked the crates in Taipei, not a cup was broken.

It was one of the cultural miracles of this most destructive of centuries — a miracle given added significance by the subsequent destruction of much that remained in China. Even though Chou En-lai protected the leading museums during the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards made bonfires of provincial and private collections of paintings and forced the owners of priceless porcelains to smash them personally.

The drama helps to explain why the trove's existence in Taiwan is so bitterly contested by Peking that the American Government had to give explicit guarantees that the

works of art now on loan would be immune to any legal challenge by China in American courts — guarantees that Taiwan would probably trust no European government to honour.

It also helps to explain why, at the last minute, Taiwan's proud new democracy nearly wrecked the entire venture. Politicians in mid-campaign for the US presidential elections bowed to vehement protests by art lovers in Taiwan, depriving the Metropolitan — and the other galleries to which the exhibition will travel — of 13 of the rarest, and most vulnerable, of the Northern Sung

paintings in the collection. Nineteen more will now be shown in only one of the visited cities, and then only for short periods.

The anxiety is understandable. The monumental landscapes of the 11th-century Northern Sung paintings are so precious and so frail that under Taiwanese law they can be unrolled for view for only 40 days in every three years.

But the gap created in the exhibition is out of all proportion to the number of items withheld, for the Northern Sung, in particular, was an early High Renaissance in Chinese aesthetics — a ferment both of rediscovery of the

past and of intense creativity. The mountains painted by Fan Kuan have an unequalled imaginative sweep and timeless perception of natural space that his imitators and successors never wholly recaptured; the paintings of Kuo Hsi are a stupendous emotional engagement with turbulent natural forces that rebuts the familiar clichés about Chinese scholarly serenity.

Even if these paintings were present, however, the delight and interest of *Splendours of Imperial China* would not have depended on the comprehensiveness of its historical sweep. Nor could it thanks to spectacular recent archaeological finds, the museums on the Chinese mainland are now vastly richer in bronzes, jade and ceramics from the neolithic period through to the Han dynasty (400 BC to AD 220) — as visitors to this September's great exhibition on ancient China at the British Museum will discover.

It is, rather, a reflection of imperial taste inherited down centuries marked by tumultuous periodic upheavals, such as the catastrophic losses during the collapse of the Ming dynasty. It is also a cultural and aesthetic history seen largely through the eyes of one ruler, the 18th-century Ch'ing Emperor, Ch'ien Lung, through whose acquisitive energy most of the collection that survives entered the Imperial Palace.

It provides us with a fascinating insight into the scholarly worlds of Ming and Ch'ing, and into the infusion, sometimes with bizarre effects, of Mongol and Tibetan tastes into the "classical" Chinese canon.

Nothing could be more different from our own sense of art and its meaning; nothing could be more seductive than this glimpse of treasures rescued from China's last great upheaval; and nothing, fortuitously, could be more dramatic than to see them at the moment when China is once again training its guns across the Taiwan Strait.

● *Splendours of Imperial China: Metropolitan Museum, New York, until May 19, and then on tour to Chicago, San Francisco and Washington DC. China: New Discoveries from the Early Dynasties, sponsored by The Times, will be at the British Museum from September 13 to January 5, 1997.*

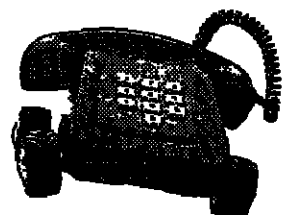
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Why the lounge is non-U

Chatting about stakeholding on Radio 4 the other day, Baroness Blackstone had me momentarily panic-stricken. "People will be talking about it in sitting rooms and dining rooms across the country," she said. Not me. I haven't got a sitting room. My home just has five rooms in it. None of them has a name.

What is a sitting room? Is it a drawing room? Is it a living room? Then what is the television room? Or the front room? Or the family room? Or the parlour? Or, indeed, the one always known as "the other room"?

Once upon a time, room naming was terribly important. It was frightfully non-U to have a lounge, for example. As bad as calling the loo the toilet. But with all the choices in the modern world, how are we to know where we might correctly discuss this stakeholding business?

If anyone should know, it is James Morgan, author of the forthcoming *Debrett's Etiquette and Modern Manners*. "In any home, the main non-eating day room should be called the drawing room," he says. "It suggests a certain formality, but is central to any pretence of civilised living. Originally known as the with-



SIGN OF THE TIMES
by Giles Coren



Every home should have one — but what do we call it?

drawing room, because one withdrew there after dinner, it remains the room where you entertain guests, and definitely not the place to eat a take-away in front of the television. In a modern home, however small, it is crucial.

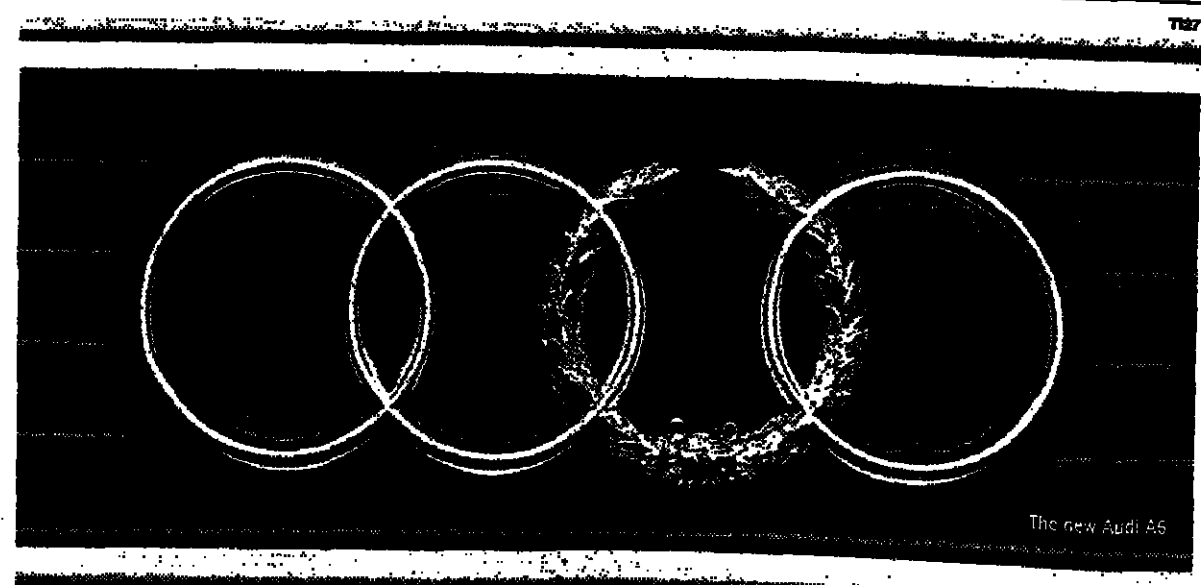
The sitting room, however, is a luxury available only to those who have a drawing room as well. "This," says Mr

Morgan, "is probably what Baroness Blackstone had in mind." It was once appended to the bedroom, and remains a more private place, having shaken off the intimacy of the boudoir. It is a more modestly furnished room, and here you might have the television or radio, or discuss stake-

holding. "Living room", it seems, is

merely a generic term for non-eating day rooms, into which these others fall. But according to Mr Morgan, "it is important to designate what each room is for". Thus family room is an acceptable alternative to sitting room, but lounge is not — "only airports have lounges" — and front room is equally NQOCD. The most common variant, of course, is the television (or occasionally telly) room. But statistics show that the average household has several televisions, so that doesn't narrow things down much.

Not, of course, that the millennial world has need of such niceties, for modern man can now work out where to read a book or smoke a cigarette without having a room specially named after the activity. But perhaps this is what stakeholding is all about. If John Major's classless society has rendered irrelevant the social distinctions pointed up by the way people name their rooms, perhaps Tony Blair envisages something new: an ideal nation, where everyone has a sitting room. For "sitting room", as we have seen, has one thing in common with stakeholding: it doesn't really mean anything.



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Lloyd George knew my mother

Whenever Jennifer Longford reads of a politician caught out in an affair, or having a love-child, she reflects on her own secret childhood. In the days when even the Prime Minister could keep his affairs private, she was born to Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary, mistress and eventual second wife.

In her childhood photographs, Lloyd George smiles indulgently down at her. They walk along leafy lanes, feed the chickens and sit in the garden discussing the New Deal.

"I could never have remained a secret today," she says, laughing. "There would be a lot more digging." Mrs Longford is a retired school teacher, still pretty at 66, and proud of her own eldest daughter Ruth, who next week publishes *Frances, More Than a Mistress*, the story her fascinating grandmother asked her to tell one day.

Before Frances died aged 84 in 1972, A.J.P. Taylor had edited her vividly observant diaries. But discretion still ruled.

Jennifer's existence had long been denied by her mother. "Do you regret never having had children yourself?" Eyle Robertson asked Frances in a television interview in 1967, when she had written her autobiography. After a pause, she replied: "Lloyd George was my child."

"I felt obliterated. Quite blotted out," Jennifer says. Like many mistresses, the spirited Frances — at 23 — justified her affair by regarding Mrs Lloyd George ("a lump of flesh, possessing like the jellyfish, the power of irritating") as a neglectful wife who, at home with the children, failed to provide a soft shoulder for her husband to lean on. Frances would always provide that.

She twice had an abortion. "I would be proud to have his child, and would be willing to suffer for it," she wrote sadly in her 1915 diary, "rather than die childless." But by 1929 she was nearly 40, and desperate for motherhood. Since LG would never risk the disgrace of divorcing his wife, Frances had an affair with a colleague, Colonel Thomas Tweed. But that Christmas LG had flu and stayed with her in Surrey. In January, Frances joined Tweed in Torquay, but was

For years, Jennifer Longford had to conceal her identity as a Prime Minister's love-child. Now she has decided to tell her story

certain that she was already pregnant by LG. She wrote to him: "It really has happened this time, my love, and I am so thrilled about it and hope that you will be too. You can depend upon me to love and cherish you 'till death us do part". You are my husband, and my little child...

From babyhood, Jennifer called LG "Taid" (Welsh for "grandfather") and he was a constant presence in her life. But she was told to say, at school, that she had been adopted by Miss Stevenson after her missionary parents had been killed in China.

Every Christmas, Jennifer was left with her nanny while Frances went away with LG. Decades later, Jennifer still felt a sinking of the heart when she heard the first carols. "But I thoroughly enjoyed my childhood and wasn't conscious of missing her, or thinking it odd. And I loved my boarding school."

Her school was evacuated to Chatsworth House. "I am still surprised when I see Henry VIII's rather fine legs in Holbein's portrait, since they covered the lower half of the pictures in case they were damaged by children running past."

At 11, she discovered a file marked "Jennifer's File" in her nursery. "It contained my school reports, a lock of my hair and a 'certificate of adoption'. My mother angrily said she would tell me who my parents were when I was 16. She said she was 'bound to secrecy'. I was so used to not knowing, I didn't mind; but I was never really fooled by her stories."

"After LG died in 1945, when I was 15, she told me a totally false story about having been married to Tweed and LG having insisted that the mar-

riage was never acknowledged, out of jealousy. She was saying I was, in fact, legitimate but very much a secret child. Somehow, deep down, I didn't believe it. Tweed showed no interest whatever in me and was married to someone else. It was only when I was 30 that I found my mother's marriage certificate stating that she was a spinster when she married LG. I confronted her with it and she said: 'Well, yes'."

"She certainly slept with both LG and Tweed in the month I was conceived, so it is perfectly possible that she was covering her tracks. Horrifying, isn't it, to think of anyone doing that, but this wonderful opportunity presented itself to make the whole thing uncertain right from the beginning."

Lloyd George, the old Welsh goat, was notorious for making passes at any young girl who crossed his path; Frances constantly had to soothe maids, farmhands etc. But Jennifer has fond memories of LG.

"I always found him great fun: I remember him reading me a story about the Moon falling into the sea and illustrating it by dropping an orange into a glass of water. He made a great fuss of me, treating me as an equal really, as someone whose opinion counted."

In 1938 Jennifer was taken to the Strangers' Gallery of the Commons to hear him speak in the appeasement debate. In November 1940, he wrote to her at school (still hoping to join Churchill's War Cabinet): "We have made blunder after blunder and are still blundering. I had experience in directing a great war and I helped to win the victory. I am unhappy at the way things are done today and I wish I could be in a position to change the course of events."

Jennifer was 14 when Frances married LG, to the fury of his family, becoming Countess Lloyd George, respectable at last. His disagreeable daughter Megan subjected both Frances and Jennifer to ostracism. "There was no atom of sympathy in Megan for my mother, even though she had herself been the mistress of a Labour MP, Philip Noel-Baker, for years."

But as a teenager she began to feel that LG was a constricting parent: "He wanted me still to be a small child. At his eightieth birthday, someone said they looked forward to his ninetieth — and my heart rather sank at the idea of growing up under this very restrictive person."

Jennifer, growing up as spirited as Frances had been, escaped first to university; and then spent a year with a slum family — unemployed father, part-time prostitute wife (whose bed Jennifer shared) and ragged children — publishing a book under the pseudonym Margaret Lassell that was acclaimed by Malcolm Muggeridge and others for its dispassionate observation of working-class life. "I wanted to find out how people lived who did not live in a nice Surrey village," she says.

She then went to teach in Tanganyika, where she instantly fell in love with the Governor's secretary, Michael Longford. "Infuriating really," she says. "I loved teaching, but within days we were engaged."

When they came home from East Africa with three children, she taught in a Surrey comprehensive specialising in giving pupils in the lowest stream the chance to get a CSE in childcare. Today, she and Michael teach English to foreign students who live with them at home in their cottage.

A box of relics contains LG's passport and her mother's official pass from Versailles in 1918. Not far away at Churt is Avalon, the lovely house Frances built and furnished for LG as a bolthole ("she always spent more time there than she had"), currently for sale at £750,000.

"I know it can't be proved that I am LG's daughter — therefore it is unimportant. People say that I look like him." She gives a blue-eyed beam. "But then they are expecting that, aren't they?"



From babyhood, Jennifer Longford called Lloyd George "grandfather" — but she "was never really fooled"



THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW

Julia Llewellyn Smith profiles George Simpson, one of Britain's latest breed of investors' darlings

Rise of the supermanager

In the public imagination, George Simpson might not be the obvious candidate for corporate superstardom. An unassuming, soft-spoken accountant with an endearing grin and rosy cheeks, Mr Simpson, 53, comes across as everybody's favourite uncle, rather than a sharp-suited smoothie speeding up the hard shoulder to catch the last Concorde.

Yet this shrewd Scot, whose favourite phrase is "You've got to get your cock on the block, laddie", has been headhunted to succeed the legendary Lord Weinstock as chief executive of Britain's biggest manufacturer, the General Electric Company, in preference to several promising candidates (including Weinstock's son).

Not only is Simpson a rank outsider, his record is determinedly undazzling. "He may not be the most exciting manager in Britain, but he is like the Rock of Gibraltar," a former colleague has said.

After joining British Leyland as an accountant in 1969, he moved through a succession of increasingly large businesses, including Coventry Climax forklift trucks, Freight Rover vans and Leyland Trucks, before taking over at Rover, first as chief executive, then as chairman.



Simpson: down to earth

None of these sparkled under Simpson but in the longer term, say insiders, they have become thriving, innovative businesses thanks largely to his strategic thinking. "The stock market doesn't love Simpson because he doesn't make radical changes," says a motor industry analyst. "But investors admire him because he tackles weaknesses and gets slow but sure results."

He moved on to British Aerospace, and was then headhunted for the position of chief executive of Lucas, the

motor parts-to-aerospace group, which has been ailing since the 1970s. "He underestimated the task he took on at Lucas," says one industry observer. "His share price has underperformed in comparison to the Footsie, but that is because his moves have been long-term, and will pay dividends in a decade's time."

Simpson's philosophy will appeal to Lord Weinstock, who has ruled GEC for more than three decades. But superficially the two men could not be more different. Weinstock, 71, is an aloof sophisticate, who loves music and racing. He is a trustee of the British Museum and has honorary degrees from ten universities.

Simpson is known as a man of the people. He has a passion for golf and rugby, is an industrial professor at Warwick University, and is the president of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Analysts on a visit to a Lucas brakes plant in France were impressed by Simpson who stayed up with them until 1.30am drinking and talking about the motor industry —

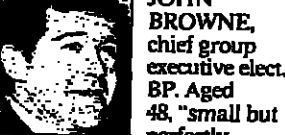
uncharacteristic behaviour for a chief executive. In common with many rising stars in the business firmament, Simpson, who has been married for 22 years and has two children, has boundless energy, a diffident manner that hides a ruthless edge and comes from a working-class background. The son of the manager of a Dundee flax mill, he attended the local grammar school and went on to the Dundee Institute of Technology.

"These are the boys who are winning through," says a

headhunter. "British business is a meritocracy. No one cares any more about the rough edges. Peter Bonfield at BT sounds really rough, he even drops his aitches. But he gets the job done."

GEC will pay Simpson around £568,000 a year, only a fraction more than his salary at Lucas. "But this isn't about money," says a former colleague. "He has taken on GEC for the challenge."

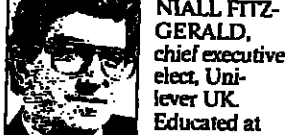
THREE MORE WHO HAVE CLIMBED TO THE TOP



JOHN BROWNE, chief group executive elect, BP. Aged 48, "small but perfectly formed", quiet, brilliant and ruthless cost-cutter. Son of a British soldier and a Romanian interpreter. King's School, Ely; Cambridge (first in physics). Stanford Business School. With BP all his working life: has held a string of troubleshooting roles from Alaska to Aberdeen, excelled as head of exploration. Obsessed with BP, eschews small-talk. Unmarried, smokes cigars, loves opera, ballet, collects primitive Colombian artefacts.



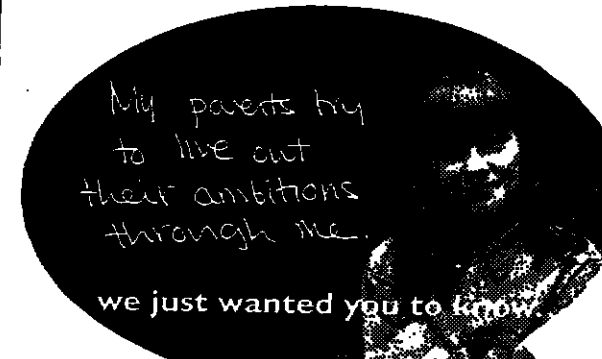
BILL COCKBURN, chief executive of WH Smith since January after 35 years at the Post Office, where he rose to chief executive. Aged 53, short, chubby, Scot, staunch family man. Son of a hospital porter, attributes managerial skills to being the oldest of eight children. Educated at the Holy Cross Academy in Edinburgh. Has a bouncy no-nonsense charm that endears him to the rank and file but colleagues say that he can be a cost-cutting "human tank". His passions are rugby and golf.



NIALL FITZGERALD, chief executive elect, Unilever UK. Educated at St Munchin's College, Limerick, and University College, Dublin. Chosen despite Persil Power, the new brand of detergent for which he had overall responsibility and which was alleged to rot clothes. Colleagues praise his leadership, creativity and analytical skills. Known as a risk-taker who can turn around an underperforming investment. Asked for a motorcycle rather than a company car. Married, 50, three children. Crazy about jazz and football.



Tomorrow in the Magazine The life of Lloyd George on film



My parents try to live out their ambitions through me. we just wanted you to know.

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A voluntary body of the Church of England and the Church of Wales.
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You can help. Call 0345 55 77 55
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Philip Howard



■ There has never been a great book without a great title — discuss

Today, the burning edge of science is Comet Hyakutake. But comets are flibbertigibbets, here today and gone tomorrow. The place to see the future of science as opposed to the state of the art is not in today's night sky but in the theses being written by tomorrow's professors. And some of these are published in this week's Oxford University Gazette. The oral examinations for the degree of doctor of philosophy offer a rainbow of special subjects to make us feel like Mr Hyakutake when his comet swam into his Zen.

We look at S-stem nouns in Indo-European word formation and "hamstringing contraction latency" at Francophilia and Francophobia in English society 1749-83 and the roles of vitamin A in embryonic lung development in mice, with a wild surmise, and have a wild regret that we shall never be so lost in scholarship as to understand them. We may feel like the man who was asked what he would take if he were to be marooned on a desert island and had the whole of Canadian literature to choose from. He answered, "Poison." But the man was wrong. He should have said Margaret Atwood and Robertson Davies for starters, and Robert Service for wilderness laughter. So we should be wrong to rule out the research projects of the Oxford scholars as over our heads and beyond our ken. For example, J. Wearing-Wilde of Wadsworth College is being examined on "Reproductive biology of the bark-louse *Lepidus patricius* (psocoptera): implications for courtship theory". Even those who shudder at distinguishing a bark-louse from the common-or-garden sort might learn how to deal with their daughters' undesirable suitors from its courtship theory. Is the bark-louse a slow courter, or fast, like the male rabbit who said to the female, "This is fun, wasn't it?"

No knowledge is entirely useless. But natural science is a wonderful source of research that sounds wacky. We used to run a column called "silly book titles of the year" at Christmas in *The Times*. But we dropped it because we felt sorry for the indignant authors, unreviewed and then, to add insult to injury, mocked in public. But the Frankfurt Book Fair still runs a competition to find the book title that "most outrageously exceeds all bounds of credibility". It has been won by such titles guaranteed to introduce a rattling good yarn as *Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Nude Mice* and *The Joy of Chickens*. And it is remarkable how many silly titles are about the other animals, from Poodle Groomers to Lappish Bear Grave Archaeologists.

In *Frog Raising for Pleasure and Profit* and other Bizarre Books, by Russell Ash and Brian Lake, the best section contains weird books on plants and animals in the wonderful world of nature. *Harvesting Earthworms* must be Thomas J. Barrett's guide to the breaking of bronco worms in the Wild West of the allotment. And *The Common Teasel as a Carnivorous Plant* sounds like a video in urgent need of a V-chip or the kind of terrifying man-eating plant that swarms over the news pages in August.

For my desert island, I fancy *Fish Who Answer the Telephone* by Yuri Petrovich Frolov. Do you think one could train them to bubble? "I'm sorry, he's in a meeting." And could such fish live in our coffee percolator? If I were marooned on a desert island, they could deal with any castaway messages in bottles that were washed up. I must also have *The Art of Faking Exhibition Poetry* by George Riley Scott. Riley Scott treats a wobbly line between condemning this widespread and despicable practice, and telling the reader how to do it. He includes a crucial piece of advice: "Always wear rubber gloves."

Dammit, there is no room in my sandy treasure island bookshelf for *New Guinea Tapeworms and Jewish Grandmothers* or *Ferret Facts and Fancies*. But I want *Frog Raising for Pleasure and Profit*, if only for its handy recipes for such things as "malted giant bullfrog savoury sandwiches".

Any human activity, when looked at through narrowed eyes, can seem ridiculous. Some books add a little to the sum of human knowledge. But silly titles are a minor genre that adds to the gaiety of desert islands.



THE BURGERS OF CALAIS
BY RODIN

A mandarin in Peking

Does the DPP, Mrs Mills, have no shame about taking tea with evil?

On my desk I have a bundle of papers some inch and a half thick, all of them consisting of complaints about the present Director of Public Prosecutions, Mrs Barbara Mills. A sample: "... police-men's leader described her as a disaster and said that she should be sacked ... Is this woman more concerned with protecting criminals' rights than convicting them? ... one senior Tory said 'She is a menace to the justice system' ... CPS director faces dissent from lawyers ... Last week Mrs Mills faced calls to resign ..."

This bombardment of poor Mrs Mills could be taken with a shrug, and mostly was, but she has now stepped into the limelight in a very different position. She has just come back from China, where she has been matching our legal system with China's, by the courtesy of the Chinese Government; she had come to "see for herself some of the 'major differences' between the two criminal justice systems".

And clearly, the Chinese Government has gone far to inveigle this booby into believing that the Chinese are not all that different from us when it comes to the business of how their respective countries run. I start with this bon-bon: "The Chinese authorities have already come to Britain and a programme for their procurators is being organised."

I'll say it is being organised. But then comes the full blast of folly. "She visited the procurators or prosecuting authorities ... in Peking, Tianjin and Shanghai, and also observed a murder trial." (What a pity she couldn't stay for the hanging.) "Major differences between the two criminal justice systems." She said it, not me. I was busy actually measuring the differences. Very major, indeed, those differences. For I have in my hand a document, from the scrupulous work of Amnesty International, headed "China: No one is safe" and goes on: "Abuse of power — Torture — Executions". For where Mrs Mills sees invisible democracy coming one day, a fifth of the world's people may never die, even in the smallest particular, the rules and orders and instructions and even beliefs that the Chinese Government has decreed. Go smile at that, Madam.

I now turn to Amnesty's document of reality. I rather doubt that Mrs Mills would have been shown what now follows. It is a list of crimes which, in China, carry capital punishment. They

are not just frighteners, and all of them have been used in executions:

... poisoning of livestock, murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, killing a tiger, armed robbery, robbery, rape, causing injury, assault, habitual theft, theft, burglary, kidnapping, trafficking in women or children, organising prostitution, pimping, organising pornography rings, publishing pornography, hoodlignism, seriously disrupting public order, causing explosions, destroying or causing damage to public or private property, counter-revolutionary sabotage, arson, drug-trafficking, corruption, embezzlement, taking bribes, fraud, speculation and profiteering, forgery, reselling value-added tax receipts, tax evasion, stealing or illegally manufacturing weapons, illegally possessing or selling firearms and ammunition, stealing or dealing in national treasures or cultural relics, selling counterfeit money, and blackmail.

It is so awful that it almost becomes funny. I wonder what Mrs Mills would have made of it, if her guide had been so careless as to show it to her. And did her

chaperones mention the "Dying Rooms", in which babies unwanted by the State are flung down, among the filth and horror, to starve and die? What? They didn't say a word about it? How racist! But surely Mrs Mills was shown one or two mass executions, which are not only numerous but steadily growing more so? These people killed by the Government, you must understand, have not been tried, and indeed they have not set eyes on any kind of court; thousands of people have been sent to the forced labour camps, with or without any reason being given. And if you haven't started to shudder yet, Mrs Mills, try this statistic: every year, more people are executed in China than in all the rest of the world put together. (But can it be that Mrs Mills was not given those numbers? Tut, tut.)

Then Mrs Mills visited a prison, "which, she thought, stood comparison with British jails ... Prisoners had quite a lot of freedom, recreation. They had televisions, a running-track and so on —

and the prisoners appeared to be well-fed and looked after". And as far as I can see, she believed every word of it.

Well, let us see if we can dent that smugness; what about "Sentences are far heavier than in Britain". Again, Mrs Mills seems to be on the verge of announcing that two and two make four. Assuredly, sentences are far heavier than in Britain, especially, I might say, when the sentences in question end with a bullet in the back of the neck.

Torture by the authorities is rife; pregnant women are in perpetual danger, as this statement, from a former planning official, shows:

It was part of my work to force women to have abortions. In the evening when the couple was likely to be at home, we would go to their houses and drag the woman out. If the woman was not at home, we would take her husband or another member along and keep them in custody until the woman turned herself in.

That's nothing. But I think this is: "An unmarried woman in Hebei province who had adopted one of her brother's children was detained several times in an attempt to force her brother to pay fines for having had too many children. In November 1994 she was held for seven days with a dozen other men and women. She was reported blindfolded, stripped naked, tied and beaten with an electric baton." (And don't think that women being beaten with an electric baton is a rare sight in China's cells.)

What are the Chinese leaders afraid of? Revolution? It would be put down in a single afternoon, and the ringleaders dead before that. Loss of face? That was abandoned years ago. A shortage of torture instruments? Alas, there has never been a shortage of those. Yet the leaders behave as if they were on the edge of a precipice and one step would take them over. Well, then, what?

It cannot be, alas, the men and women who have dared to defy the brutish system: those heroes and heroines will get their prize in Heaven, not on this earth. The name Ren Wandong would be

known to only a few; but he was the man who dared to speak out, knowing what the penalty would be. He had been in China's jails before, based on his "calls for respect for human rights, free speech and the rule of law". He was then sentenced to seven years' prison, but before his "trial" he said, "I am no longer afraid. I have already died once in prison. Once you have been there, you are never really afraid again."

And what about those ten monks, who gave out leaflets which included a Tibetan translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Pause for a moment at the thought of those monks. They knew what would happen, and it did: would you go on giving out leaflets in the shape of a tiny corner of the truth, when you knew what the result would be? I wouldn't. Well, these monks were sentenced for terms ranging from five years to 19 years. And Chinese prisoners sweat out their terms with no remission.

I thought of torturing up all the prison terms I had noted in my document, but it would have taken me hours to finish. So instead, I thought about Wei Jingsheng, though I had thought a lot about him, and I dare say I shall think more about him yet. He was the man, if you don't know, who had been imprisoned for 15 years, with no remission, for "expressing his views about politics and human rights". Then he was released, and within weeks he was found expressing his views about politics and human rights again, whereupon he was sentenced to another 12 years.

Let us come back to the beginning, and those three tolling bells: "Abuse of power", "Torture", and "Executions". Yes, that makeshift with its plain truth, "China — No one is safe", was absolutely right. But that makes one think not about a giant land called China that is striving to look as though it is a country that will one day match the real democracies, but about something much more like Rwanda.

As for the ones who truly believe everything and anything that they are told, there is little hope for them. Does Mrs Mills feel ashamed at what Amnesty has dug up while she was taking tea with evil? Well, if she doesn't, perhaps she might think about Taiwan, and agree that the Taiwanese are having a fine time. In any case, we should think about the Buddhist who has just been sentenced to 28 years.

Bernard Levin

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Heeding the wrong boffins

Magnus Linklater asks how the beef saga came to this

The instinct of any British government is to protect British industries, to save money and to maintain public confidence. That is why the Government's response to health scares involving food is almost always wrong. Ministers react with caution when action is required, and panic when good sense should prevail. That is precisely what has happened with the BSE crisis, which is certainly the most serious of its kind since the war. For the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, even to be contemplating the slaughter of Britain's 11 million cattle is a measure of the desperate straits in which he now finds himself.

It would be an absurd and misguided solution, but what is every bit as deplorable is the history of missed opportunities, suppressed evidence and failure of nerve which has characterised the Government's handling of the issue hitherto. "I can't imagine a more damaging scenario," said one Borders farmer to me yesterday morning as he contemplated the possible end of his herd, built up carefully over seven years. "A large but unknown proportion of infected cattle, a large but unknown proportion of infected people, no reliable tests, and an incubation period of five to fifteen years."

The Government would argue that it has simply responded down the years to the best available scientific evidence, and that until Wednesday, when scientists at the Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease unit at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital finally conceded that there might be a link between BSE and CJD, there was no reason to alarm the public and threaten a major industry.

It is not so simple; science rarely is. Down the years, there has been no shortage of solid warnings from wise and reliable experts that Britain faced a cattle epidemic which could turn into an equally catastrophic human epidemic. As long ago as the early 1980s, the environmental expert Richard North was hearing from vets, farmers, and abattoir owners about substantial levels of BSE in the West Country. The official response in 1986 was to offer farmers compensation for slaughtering infected cattle, but not only did the Government fail to police this properly, but the compensation was only for half of the cattle's value. From 1986 to 1989, hundreds of infected cattle were allowed into the slaughtering system.

The Southdown committee, set up in 1988 to assess the possible dangers to human beings, contained no experts in spongiform brain disease, and concluded that the risk of passing on the disease was "remote". Ministers, from John Gummer onwards, have seized on this, seeing it as a way of holding the line. At the same time they have downplayed and even suppressed contradictory evidence. Dr Harash Narang, who submitted evidence linking BSE and CJD in 1990, and who claims to have devised urinary tests for diagnosing both diseases, has seen his career decline. Dr Gerald Forbes, formerly director of environmental health in Scotland, says he was "sidelined" when he refused to accept the government view of BSE. Professor Richard Lacey, who has been a moving force in urging the ban of offal and other parts of slaughtered cattle since 1990, is regarded as unreliable, and the view of Sir Bernard Tomlinson, the retired neuropathologist, who said publicly last year that he had warned his children and grandchildren not to eat beefburgers, was dismissed.

But instead, the Government has concentrated mainly on epidemiology, investigating dietary habits and the risks faced by farmers, vets and slaughtermen. Richard North says there were flaws in the way evidence was reported. The Government veterinary service was being cut back just when first-hand evidence was needed, and there was a fatal division of responsibility between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Health.

Dr Forbes believes that the ministry was too close to the farming lobby, and so was prepared to shrug off evidence linking the two diseases. "I've always said the agriculture department was too fond of the farmers," he told me. "All the running was made by veterinary officers rather than medical officers."

Perhaps worst of all, the whole BSE saga has been shrouded in the kind of secrecy that characterises so much government policy. There has been a suspicion of those who challenge the orthodox view and an unwillingness to discuss the risk for fear of putting a £3 billion industry at risk. The net result has been to achieve precisely that.

Asked yesterday what we should do now, most experts began with a version of "I wouldn't have started from here". But all agreed that the wholesale slaughter of Britain's cattle would be a mistake. Richard North pointed out that since only ten deaths from CJD had been linked to cattle, the causes of another 90 are unaccounted for. Dr Narang believes that his urinary test must now be given proper consideration, if only because if it proves reliable it would be the quickest way of restoring public confidence. Dr Forbes points out that eliminating Britain's cattle herd will do nothing for people already infected, and adds that incidences of BSE are now in steady decline.

What clearly needs to change is the way health risks are tackled. What the BSE scandal reveals is that when a government is afraid of the answers, it is not prepared to listen to the questions.

Fish to fry

SIX YEARS ON, John Gummer may be regretting feeding his young daughter Cordelia a hamburger in front of the cameras. But the public relations exercise cannot have been so foolhardy as that of a number of Peruvian politicians who in 1991 were trying to play down a cholera scare in their country.

The Peruvian Fisheries Minister, Félix Canal Torres, appeared on television to reassure the public. He was joined by the President, Alberto Fujimori, and the Agriculture Minister. And together, they cheerfully tucked into a plate of raw fish to prove that it was perfectly safe for human consumption. Sensibly, the Health Minister refused to indulge himself.

The next day, Canal Torres fell ill. Indeed, so sick was the poor fellow that he had to be carried off to hospital. The South American newspapers reported, a touch too gleefully, that he was suffering from cholera.

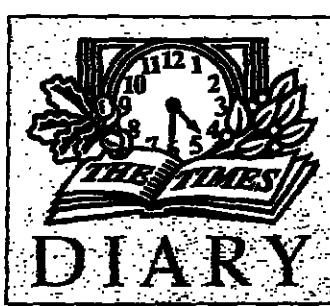
Fortunately, he made a good recovery and the official government line was that he had laryngitis, unrelated to his TV dinner. But Canal Torres now thinks twice before feasting on raw fish.

Stephen Dorrell's pronunciation of "mad cow" disease disturbed the rural slumber at the Archers studio at Radio 4. Staff were summoned to re-record part of last night's episode and incorporate a "topical insert" on the British beef crisis — just as they were summoned when Terry Waite was released. John Archer, whose family has farmed for 150 years, became the first Archer to fight shy of beef.

One's snack

AS NIGHT falls on Mayfair, a car pulls out from the Lancer's International restaurant opposite Claridge's and makes its way to Buckingham Palace. Kuldeep Makhlani, owner and head chef at the restaurant, is on his twice-weekly curry run, whizzing round bhujas, bhajis and bindi for the Queen and her household.

Specialising in French and Chinese as well as Indian cuisine, Lancer's has won its royal contract after being open a mere four months. Makhlani, however, who owns six restaurants in his home city of Bombay, is used to royalty. When the Kings of Nepal and



Bhutan feel like something spicy, it is his telephone which rings.

So, is the Queen a vindaloo-wallah or a sucker for the soothing korma? Unlike certain other royal retainers, Makhlani is something of a limp poppadum when it comes to divulging the private tastes of his First Customer. "I can say nothing officially at this time," he says. "I'll warrant he will in time."

Final score

COLLECTORS of cricket ephemera will be out in force for a forthcoming auction. Brian Johnston's family is to sell the contents of the great man's study. Proceeds from the Phillips auction, to be held this summer, will go to the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust.

An early inventory reveals that Johnners squirrelled away scorecards, his commentary notes and

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Ballet good show, Sarah

Sarah Wildor, 23, was discovered recently by Janis Anderson, managing director of Bermonia hats, after a night at the ballet.

When she looked up from her programme to see the lissom Wildor tiptoeing onto the stage as Manon, Anderson was won. Within days, the ballerina was signed up. "She has the most wonderful eyes," gushes Anderson. "They bring to mind the saying that they are the window of the soul." For the purists, Wildor can be seen in her six-banky performance of *Giselle* next month.

P.H.S

Iman and David: just comfy



A HAPPY HYBRID

Ulster's parties should accept these elections

The electoral system for Ulster's peace forum unveiled yesterday looks an ugly mongrel. The combination of constituency lists and Province-wide popularity polls will fascinate psephologists but leaves the parties bewildered. But, given the raw materials with which it had to work, the Government has fashioned a workable compromise which no reasonable party can object to on principled grounds. Northern Ireland's politicians would do their people a grave disservice if they did not seek to make the mongrel work.

Devising elections for a peace convention was always going to be a task to test ministers' ingenuity. Scarcely more than a month ago nationalist Ireland regarded elections as an Orange ramp designed to restore Stormont by stealth. Once Dublin and John Hume had been persuaded to travel to all-party talks by a democratic path another difference emerged: each party preferred a separate path. The Ulster Unionists wanted to use Westminster constituencies, the DUP and SDLP advocated variants of the European election practice of treating the Province as one constituency.

Each side dressed up its case with arguments of principle but it was obvious they were manoeuvring for simple party advantage. Westminster elections play to the Ulster Unionists' strength and the European poll rewards the longer-serving, high-profile leaders of the SDLP and DUP.

Churchill observed that democracy was the worst way of choosing politicians, apart from all the rest. The same could be said of these elections. If the Government had adopted any of the proffered systems it would instantly have alienated a significant section of mainstream Ulster opinion and imperilled progress. It had to devise a

scheme whose parentage was, at the least obscure, at best various. The resulting compromise delights no party but it passes the important tests.

The system seems complex but it will be simple for the voters. They will vote once, for the party they wish to represent them in negotiations on Ulster's future. Voting by constituency should help smaller parties whose support is geographically concentrated, such as the Alliance or the fringe Unionists who speak for the loyalist paramilitaries. The top-up 20 elected from the Province's ten biggest parties should maximise inclusiveness.

Not only will the forum grant democratic legitimacy to those who should negotiate a stable settlement in Ulster, it will also exist as a body in which Northern Ireland's politicians can learn new habits. Nationalist fears of the forum evolving into another Protestant parliament should be allayed by the two-year maximum life-span laid down.

Talks should follow elections almost immediately, but it looks gravely unlikely that they will be all-party. Without an IRA ceasefire there will be no invitation to Sinn Féin. Ministers insist that, even with an unequivocal ceasefire, there will be no progress without a commitment from the republicans to pursue their goals by exclusively peaceful methods and tackle de-commissioning. There is already pressure to dilute these conditions. It must be resisted.

Ulster's future should be decided by those prepared to compromise and accept the will of the Province's people. Republicans still show no sign of accepting basic principles of democratic consent. The best response to terror is a determination by democrats not to weaken, but to learn to work together. The forum is the place to start and these elections are the best available route there.

THE POLITICIAN AND THE COW

A modern morality tale for adults and children

However carefully chosen the sombre words of ministers and government scientists, the alarm about beef safety is growing. The Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee will not decide until the weekend whether it is safe to allow children to eat beef products. But more schools throughout the country have taken hamburgers off the menu. In Brussels, veterinary experts are meeting today to see how the European Union can protect its consumers. But already France, Germany and Belgium have imposed bans on all British beef. Their action is illegal; but their response entirely understandable. On this side of the Channel, British consumers are about to inflict on the £4 billion beef industry one of the most devastating boycotts to hit a staple food.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, is even contemplating the wholesale slaughter of Britain's cattle in an attempt to rid the country of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Scientists who have long raised their voices against government complacency are now listened to with respect and trepidation. Professor Richard Lacey suggests that up to 500,000 people may develop Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Sales of beef now look set for a precipitous decline. Farmers face ruin at the weekend auctions; thousands may go bankrupt.

It is a terrible tale of woe which is not over yet. Mere reassurance will not halt the immediate stampede away from beef. There is no reassurance while herds are infected and even the smallest possibility exists of transmission to human beings. Popular feeling is fickle but the Government must steel itself for a catastrophe in British agriculture. If all herds had to be destroyed, full compensation for 11 million cattle would run to about £14 billion, with perhaps a further £6 billion for the loss of beef-related jobs. Beef would be scarce for about five years; imported dairy products would be prohibitively expensive.

The Government may balk at such a step. The question of compensation itself would be controversial. Even allowing that the Government must be held responsible because it approved the feeding methods which allowed BSE to be passed through the ruminant food chain, analogous industrial arguments for tax-payer bale-outs receive scant shrift. Builders have not been so generously compensated for ripping out asbestos, even though the Government approved it as a suitable fire-resistant material.

Agriculture has to be shown to be different. But how different? Farmers are the stewards of the countryside; their survival is essential to our enjoyment of our own land; although wartime ideas that Britain needs autarky in food production no longer hold water, farming is still an essential industry. These arguments hold force but not as much force as once they did. Agriculture needs to be weaned from dependence on subsidies, European intervention prices and other modern trends which have damaged farmers' reputations, not least for stewardship of the countryside.

Movement to free markets is needed. But that movement needs to be gradual and sure if it is to gain common consent. Political realities alone — obvious from a look at the electoral map — shows that no politician dare offend the farming lobby by precipitately denying support.

Any strategy to counter BSE and future crises of the same kind must deal with the power of the farming lobby. In many ways it is the very success of British agriculture, its arrogance in believing that it can go against nature in feeding cattle, that has so contributed to the BSE catastrophe. The Ministry of Agriculture has itself been too long too influenced by the food producers. The independent voice of consumers has been too weak. Humility must inform the tough decisions ahead. The Government and the country have paid a high price for hubris.

THE PIGEON HAS LANDED

Why the VAT-man is a spoilsport

There was first the mystery thief of Trafalgar Square who crammed hundreds of pigeons into his cardboard box, destined for we know not what end. Now, in another cruel blow to the pigeon monde, a Customs and Excise tribunal in Bristol has ruled that pigeon racing is not a "sport"; it is, instead, a mere "hobby". Members of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association will, as a result, have to pay VAT on their annual subscriptions, netting about £30,000 a year for the taxman.

We do not like this one bit. Pigeon racing is a sport, and to class it as a hobby or pastime — lumping it with Pooh-sticks, tiddlywinks or table-football — is but to traduce heedlessly an ancient art. There are few creatures more sophisticated than the homing pigeon, and the bond between bird and trainer is often akin to that between clever child and proud parent.

There are important questions that we feel obliged to raise. Can the killjoy tribunal have been unaware that pigeons were raced at the time of the fifth Egyptian dynasty? Did its members know that the Sultan of Baghdad established a pigeon post system in the 12th century AD, and that Genghis Khan — known as much for his love of pigeons as for his hatred of other living things — used just such a system to link one bloody corner of his empire to another?

And did the tribunal really expect a sympathetic response from *The Times*? After all, our relationship with the homing pigeon is a warm and affectionate one, and goes back to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. During the harsh siege of Paris, communications between the French capital and Printing House Square were cut off more completely than they were even during the Napoleonic Wars. By an ingenious combination of hot-air balloons ("windbags" as they were then called) and carrier pigeons, news travelled to London to be printed — and then travelled back to Paris, reduced to microscopic size, to be read by projection onto a screen.

The VAT-slapped racing pigeons of today belong to that noble line which once took *The Times* to war-torn Paris: the tribunal, whose sense of poetry is small, clearly does not appreciate this. And its mean-spirited decision, predictably, could lead to yet more problems with Brussels. The trouble, fortunately, would not arise with the European Commission this time, although there can be no guarantees in this business. It would arise, instead, with that other renowned body whose headquarters are in the Belgian capital — the Fédération Colombophile International. British pigeon racers: take your case to pigeon-loving Brussels. Unless you have nothing to lose but your VAT.

Dangers of BSE link with humans

From Professor Emeritus Ivor H. Mills

Sir, Yesterday's announcement by the Government that the strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the young people and farmers who died of the disease in recent years is a new one (reports, March 21) must revive the worries that CJD represents a trans-species infection by BSE from cattle to humans. The much faster fall in the number of BSE cattle slaughtered per month will not allay these fears.

Although those of us who gave evidence to the Select Committee on Agriculture in 1990 must regret that we were not able to make the case forcefully enough to persuade the Government to take much more rigid measures to safeguard the population, the recent news must be firstly to try to fathom how they were infected and secondly to decide on the essential steps to prevent unnecessary further infection.

The oral route of infection with prion protein diseases, such as scrapie and CJD, requires a heavy infection which could come from the nervous system or the lymphoid tissues, especially in made-up meat products. How then did the farmers get infected by caring for cattle bearing BSE?

In giving evidence to the committee in 1990 Dr Helen Grant stressed the risks from opening the skulls of affected animals and spraying parts of infected brain over the rest of the meat or into the atmosphere that the abattoir workers were inhaling. Equally, if the farmers fed the meat and bone meal to their cattle, the dust that such food produces could have been breathed in by the farmers and caused the infection.

From now on the brains of calves under six months should not be available for consumption by man or animals. Meat and bone meal should not be allowed to be made from any cattle or flocks of sheep or goats known to have scrapie. Such stocks which are available should not be used to feed any animals or birds. Destruction of all offal from cattle and sheep should be in such a manner that it cannot get into the environment — eg, it should not be buried where rats or other animals can get at it and run the risk of spreading the abnormal prion throughout the wild animal population.

It still seems to me that muscle meat ("a cut off the joint") is safe to eat if strict precautions are taken to prevent contamination. Made-up meat dishes will still be highly suspect unless one can be certain they are made from safe muscle meat.

Yours faithfully,
IVOR H. MILLS,
University of Cambridge
Clinical School,
Department of Surgery,
Douglas House,
Addenbrooke's Hospital,
Trumpington Road, Cambridge.
March 21.

From Ms Sara Starkey

Sir, We are told it is best to breast-feed our babies, thus immunising them with our antibodies to help protect them in the first months of life. We are also told, while breast-feeding, not to take alcohol, smoke or consume unnecessary medication and drugs, as this will taint our breast milk.

We now have a panic (rightly, I believe) over a connection between BSE and CJD through the eating of beef. As farmers can milk cows until the day a cow is diagnosed with BSE, surely the Government and the media should be further investigating the possibility of a link between the consumption of cow's milk and other dairy products and BSE/CJD. Or is such a link too inconvenient and too awful to contemplate?

Yours etc,
SARA STARKEY,
12a Ashburnham Road,
Tonbridge, Kent.

From Mr R. M. Pickering

Sir, Could there be a clearer illustration of why the public does not trust politicians than the Government's handling of BSE?

Yours etc,
ROBERT PICKERING,
31 Argyle Road, W8.
March 21.

Lottery dreams

From Mr Peter Scott

Sir, Tim Congdon (article, March 15; letters, March 21) is mistaken in contrasting the dream of winning the lottery with the Thatcherite "virtues of thrift and hard work".

The prospect of something for nothing has been a characteristic of government policy for the last 16 years: the sale of council houses at below market prices, the windfall profits from privatisation, the desire for tax cuts, the creation of unemployment and insecurity with the resulting expansion of the dependency culture.

The lottery is not a denial of Thatcherism: it is its apotheosis.

Yours faithfully,
PETER SCOTT,
24 Cefn Coed Avenue, Cardiff.

Business letters, page 27

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Divorce law: good intentions and lessons of experience

From Baroness Young and others

Sir, We were disappointed by the letters from Lord Carr and Lord Elton and from the Bishop of Worcester (March 18) concerning the Family Law Bill. They fail to take account of some of the key points that were raised during the lengthy proceedings in the House of Lords.

Above all they fail to recognise that fault is not to blame for so-called "quickie" divorces, but rather the special procedure introduced in 1977 under a statutory instrument. This cut the time between decree nisi and decree absolute from six months to six weeks, so encouraging people to allege fault.

In Northern Ireland, where there is no special procedure, the majority of divorces are on the basis of two or five years' separation, and there is no clamour to change their law. In Scotland as recently as 1989 the Scottish Law Commission recommended a retention of a fault-based system, and their divorce rate is lower than in England and Wales.

The Bishop of Worcester's description of the Bill as putting "marriage and the family at the centre" beggars belief. The "no-fault" experience in other countries shows that it has increased the divorce rate. The most thorough and detailed American study to date showed that no-fault divorce led to a significant increase in the divorce rate of between 15 per cent and 25 per cent.

We believe that the same factors that operated there could well lead to a comparable increase in this country. Similar evidence is becoming available from Australia. It should come as a warning, and not a surprise, that almost a quarter of US states are considering Bills to repeal their no-fault divorce laws.

When the "no-fault" provision is coupled with the provision to allow a divorce at the end of a year, even against the wishes of one of the parties — without any reason being given except the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage — young people in particular will see this as divorce on demand, and hardly an example to set to the next generation.

With today's report that the Office of Population Censuses and Survey expects a further increase in the percentage of marriages ending in divorce, we hope that Conservative colleagues in the Commons will amend this flawed Bill to promote the institution of marriage. The Conservative Party has always believed in the traditional family, and the institution of marriage. It is time for it to live up to its beliefs.

Yours faithfully,
YOUNG,
JEFFREY ARCHER,
GRIFFITHS OF FFORESTFACH,
House of Lords,
March 20.

From the Principal of St Anne's College, Oxford

Sir, The present debate on divorce reform (letters, March 8, 18) has been to some extent invalidated by a lack of appreciation of the gap that always opens up between family law on the statute book and its effect in practice. For example, judging by precedent, the one-year waiting period is hardly likely to amount to a genuine opportunity for reflection because the pressure to reach the required financial settlements within it will itself be an embittering and terminal experience in those cases where there is any money or property to divide.

The start of the year will also provide an opportunity for (usually) the wife to seek an order to oust her husband from the home, a move which is tactically advantageous under our ancillary relief principles and will be facilitated by the domestic violence part of the Family Law Bill. An ouster order will effectively scotch the prospects for reconciliation or second thoughts.

No-fault divorce originated in California in 1969 and has spread to all 50 American states. Just like our proposals, they had the best of intentions, and they all have a cooling-off period of six to 12 months and media-

mand, and hardly an example to set to the next generation.

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tion for children's issues. The results have been a rise in divorce, the destruction of any residual power to bargain and delay divorce on the part of the spouse who does not want it, and continuing damage to children.

No-fault divorce in the US is widely recognised as having become divorce on demand. Several American states now have plans to repeal no-fault divorce and to return to marriage with obligations. It is ironic that we are seemingly about to enact a divorce law that has been tried and found to fail in its objectives in the US.

Yours sincerely,
R. L. DEECH, Principal,
St Anne's College, Oxford.

From the Director and Chief Executive of the NSPCC

Sir, The NSPCC welcomes the intention of the Family Law Bill to reduce family breakdown and save marriages. The Bill will provide an invaluable opportunity for couples to consider their difficulties and for saving their relationship. This can only be good for the children.

We recognise that all families are different and that decisions about how long a period of reflection between initial application and the granting of a divorce is always going to be controversial and difficult. We do, however, take the view that on balance a 12-month period should be sufficient for a couple to decide whether or not the marriage can be saved.

We know that the disruption caused by divorce can severely limit the parents' capacity to care for their children, and we believe that any longer period would unnecessarily extend the duration of uncertainty and insecurity for the child. A year is a very long time in the life of a child, both developmentally and psychologically.

Yours sincerely,
JIM HARDING,
Director and Chief Executive,
The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children,
42 Curtain Road, EC2,
March 20.

English syllabus

From the Chief Executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Sir, Far from marginalising Shakespeare, as Susan Elkin suggests (Education, March 15; letter, March 19), GCSE English syllabuses will ensure that, for the first time, all pupils are required to submit work on a Shakespeare play.

This is not the case at present. Neither the English nor the English Literature GCSE requirements insist that Shakespeare is examined. In some syllabuses no more than a sonnet, or an extract from a play, is required.

The new GCSE syllabuses aim to preserve balance in the English curriculum. This means demanding high standards in grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation, and placing a new emphasis on the English literary heritage. It also means introducing pupils to the richness of writing in English from around the world, and to different types of non-fiction.

Pupils need a critical appreciation of great literature. They also need a level of literacy that will allow them to function effectively in further studies or in work. The strengthened rules for GCSE will help to meet these goals.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS TATE,
Chief Executive,
School Curriculum and Assessment Authority,
Newcombe House,
45 Notting Hill Gate, W11,
March 19.

Workless in the wings

From Mrs Lisa England

Sir, Whilst having every sympathy with the plight of "resting" actors deprived of unemployment benefit (report, March 19), I was astonished to read that 25 per cent of Equity members (some 10,000) had not worked at all during the last year. This suggests that the profession is oversubscribed.

If you enter an oversubscribed profession, must you not take responsibility for the luxury of making that choice? Should you not try supporting yourself in some other occupation, whilst waiting to exercise your skills, rather than expect the diminishing number of taxpayers to support you?

Yours faithfully,
LISA ENGLAND,
84a Oakwood Court, W14,
March 19.

Couch potatoes

From Mrs Jennifer Radice

Sir, "Research shows that six out of ten men and seven out of ten women spend too much time sitting around" (report, March 20).

I collect "research has shown" news items. This one is a gem. How much is too much? How did the researchers classify "sitting around"? Is one exempted from the implied condemnation if one is writing letters, embroiling *petit point* or even reading *The Times*?

Yours faithfully,
JENNIFER RADICE,
10 Middleton Road, NW11,
March 21.

Unrest in Bahrain

From Sir Steven Runciman

Sir, On March 15 you reported an outrage in Bahrain, where an Indian restaurant was destroyed by fire and several workers killed in the blaze. By linking the incident to violence from Shia Muslims you apparently imply that it was caused by resentment at the lack of Western-style democracy in that country.

While it is difficult to see how the cause of democracy is helped by the massacre of six innocent Indians, most people familiar with the Gulf know that the unrest in Bahrain is due to agents from Islamic Shia fundamentalists sent from Iran by a government whose propagandists have realised that complaints that democracy does not exist in Bahrain will win sympathy for their cause from the media in Britain and the United States.

Bahrain is chosen by the Iranians as a suitable target for their imperialism because, while the ruling family there belongs to the Sunni persuasion, the majority of its citizens are Shia. Most of them have lived contentedly

for generations under the benevolent and tolerant rule of the al-Khalifa dynasty; others have come over more recently, to escape from the authoritarian government in Iran.

They know themselves to be fortunate in living in a country where there is no income tax, where food and housing are subsidised and most medical treatment is absolutely free and which maintains the old Muslim tradition of allowing every inhabitant to have personal access to the Ruler.

When I last visited Bahrain, earlier this year, I was impressed by the lack of poverty and the general contentment of its people. It is sad that the cause and importance of the recent incidents there should be misinterpreted by the media in this country and go uncorrected by the authorities: this is already beginning to damage the popularity of the British in Bahrain. It would be tragic were Britain to lose the friendship of her most loyal and generous ally in the Muslim world.

Yours faithfully,
STEVEN RUNCIMAN,
Elstree, Herts.,
Lockridge, Dumfriesshire,
March 16.

Musician of fun

From Mr J. M. Macmillan

Sir, Your obituary of Lady Read (March 15) did justice to her musicality and personality but to my mind did not completely capture the tremendous fun and adventure of being involved in her musical enterprises.

The first revived Hovingham Festival in the early 1950s at Hovingham Hall, North Yorkshire, was preceded by great bustle and excitement, and for a young boy it seemed the most sophisticated happening imaginable. The performance of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, which she staged in the temple above Rievaulx Abbey, was so moving that even now it is easy to feel again the romance and tragedy.

My most enduring memory of Margaret Read was her attendance at Mass at Ampleforth. Because the Catholic Church did not recognise her marriage to Sir Herbert, whose wife was still alive, she was "living in sin" and therefore could not receive Holy Communion. But there she knelt every Sunday.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES MACMILLAN,
Curling Tye Cottage,
Woodham Walter,
Maldon, Essex.
March 17.

Taiwan sovereignty

From Mr S. Y. Lee

Sir, When Taiwan's sovereignty is discussed as in Jonathan Mursky's report today, it seems to me that Taiwan is just like a lost property waiting for someone to claim its ownership. I would like to point out that 21 million people live there and the sovereignty of Taiwan surely belongs to them.

Yours faithfully,
SHIUN YONG LEE (Chairman),
The Taiwanese Association in the United Kingdom,
21 Welldon Crescent,
Harrow, Middlesex,
March 19.

No Smoking Day

From Mr Clive Turner

Sir, Lady Hillhouse, Chair of No Smoking Day 1996, tells us (letter, March 19) that this annual event is not state-run, but is an independent charity. Maybe, but the main component parts of that charity are unquestionably supported by the taxpayer. ASH, one of the prime movers, receives substantial government funding, and who does Lady Hillhouse suppose provides resources for the Health Education Authority?

In any case, the prevailing motivation of the 11 million ex-smokers in this country has not been any special day, but principally the long-standing government greed in imposing tobacco tax increases, now providing over £9 billion a year, or £18,000 a minute, for the Exchequer.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE TURNER
(Executive Director,
Industry Affairs),
Tobacco Manufacturers' Association,
55 Tufton Street, Westminster, SW1,
March 19.

Housing repairs

From Mr Allan Gore

Sir, Judge Holman (letter, March 16) is right. The combined effect of the recent brake on costs imposed by the Court of Appeal and of the latest increase in the financial limit of the small claims jurisdiction of the county court will be to bar some of the poorest and most needy members of society from legal advice and representation in the pursuit of housing repair claims.

Such cases turn on some of the most labyrinthine, obscure and complex laws of the land. I ask Lords Woolf (civil justice review) and Mackay (legal aid review), is this access to justice?

Yours sincerely,
ALLAN GORE,
12 Kings Bench Walk, Temple, EC4,
March 16.

OBITUARIES

VICTOR ZORZA

Victor Zorza, Kremlinologist, died on March 20 aged 70. He was born on October 19, 1925.

VICTOR ZORZA enjoyed an international reputation, from the 1950s to the 1970s, as the most imaginative analyst of Soviet policy. He wrote first for *The Guardian*, later in America for *The Washington Post*, and had the distinction of correctly predicting, among other landmarks of Soviet history, the breakdown in Soviet relationships with China and the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

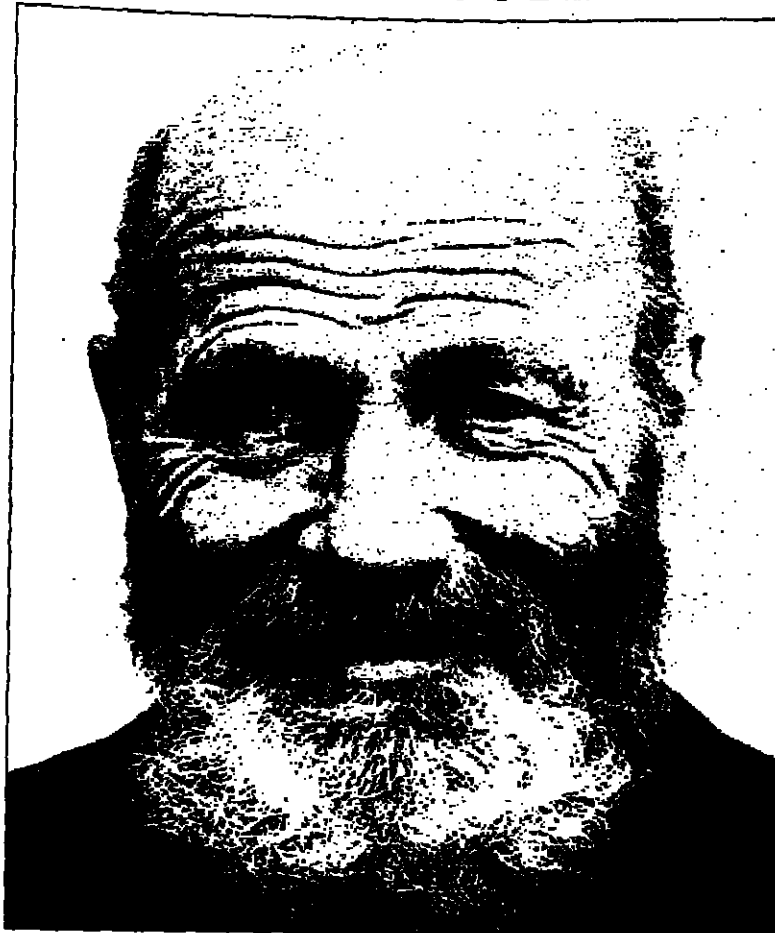
His ambition to work on *The Manchester Guardian* (as it used to be) sprang from his spell with the Polish Air Force during the Second World War. Improbable, he was based somewhere in the Middle East, but managed occasionally to read the weekly edition. After the war, however, he discovered that the newspaper did not need the need for a full-time Kremlinologist, so he worked instead for the BBC monitoring service at Faversham.

This was a long way from Zorza's childhood in eastern Poland. He was born into a family of Polish Jews, and when Poland was invaded in 1939 fled to the Soviet Union. He was anxious about what had become of his family and returned to search for them. Immediately he was picked up, deported to Siberia, and after many adventures, escaped to Britain to join the exiled Polish Air Force in 1942.

After the war he attempted again to trace his relations, but after much searching had to conclude that no one in his extended family had survived. He became obsessed with the enormous sum of human misery caused by wars, and with the onset of a cooler relationship between the East and West, read voraciously anything he could on the Soviet Union. He joined the BBC's Foreign Service, monitoring its Soviet broadcasts, and bombarded *The Manchester Guardian* with articles on the subject. He married Rosemary, a colleague at the BBC, in 1949.

Zorza's professional fortunes changed dramatically in 1953 on the night that Stalin died. *The Manchester Guardian* found that it had no obituary. He wrote a monumental piece and therefor became the paper's resident Kremlinologist. In 1956 he was taken onto the staff of the paper. His consuming interest in his subject was matched by a vigorous command of English which it was hard to believe had been attained at a Polish secondary school.

He settled down to many years of watching the Soviet political scene. He scored a particular success with his



perceptive articles on the deteriorating relationship between Moscow and Peking in 1957. The quoted evidence usually seemed of the flimsiest: the omission of China from a Kremlin listing of brothers-in-arms, the careful parsing of sentences from articles in *Pravda* that could be read as reflecting pique with Peking. This was just the sort of minute detail that other observers would miss, or be at a loss as to how to interpret.

To some colleagues, Zorza's Kremlinology seemed to rest on the endless identification of dogs that did not bark. His defence of his methods was robust: "You simply do not understand. I tell you that I'm right." And by the early 1960s he was proved to be so.

He was one of the few observers to foresee the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Soviet authorities had taken the strongest exception to Zorza's reporting in the build-up to this, particularly to an article entitled "The Czech regime is in danger". A retaliatory article in *Investia* claimed that Zorza had entirely misrepresented the situation and described him as "striving by means of sundry forgeries

and fabrications to rupture the bonds of friendship and brotherhood between the USSR and Czechoslovakia". The paper also claimed that Zorza had been a Soviet agent since 1957 but — in a cut which Zorza found particularly unkind — they found that he had always worked "quite negligently".

By then Zorza was practising his craft from a rustic cottage near Burnham Beeches. *The Guardian* (as it became in 1959) provided a Slav-speaking assistant and Zorza filled the cottage with filing boxes crammed with newspaper cuttings in Cyrillic script. From the outset he regarded any truncation of his copy as an attack on his personal integrity. Colleagues suggested that he should rid himself of this sense of injustice by writing books as well as journalism. But Zorza was a writer who saw text only in 1,000-word chunks. Along with other writers, he became more discontented still when some of the consequences of *The Guardian's* move to London in the early 1960s became apparent.

In 1971 he left Britain and joined the staff of *The Washington Post*. He avoided briefings and Washington

lunches, spending his days, as before, prowling through stacks of Soviet bloc newspapers. Again, this painstaking approach yielded impressive results, and his column became required reading in the White House.

Then came a personal tragedy for Zorza. In 1977 his daughter Jane contracted a melanoma on the sole of her foot. Zorza and his wife returned to Britain and, in a distressingly short time, watched their daughter die in a hospice. The care which was provided impressed Zorza enormously and he was moved to write a book about Jane's death, not only as a form of catharsis, but in order to promote the growth of the hospice movement. *A Way to Die* was published in 1979, but before it had been published, Zorza had to undergo a heart bypass operation and was informed that he himself probably had only a year to live.

This galvanised him into the next stage of his career. Ever since a trip to India which he had made with his daughter, Zorza had been planning to return and to write about the problems facing the rural poor in the Third World. As soon as he was able, he did so and, from 1981, lived mostly in a mud-and-stone hut in the Himalayas.

He produced a weekly column for *The Times* on local life which, for the first time, attempted to provide Western readers with an unsentimental, vigorous account of villagers' lives. Peasant life did not change him much. He set about collaring the great, the good and the famous of the locality with all the zeal of a cub reporter hunting for a story.

In 1989 he was returning home, as he did quite regularly, and decided to do so via Moscow. While he was there his old interest in the hospice movement was reawakened, when the terrible plight of the terminally ill in that country was brought to his attention. He was appalled by what he saw and determined to do what he could for the Russian people during his last years (he was still fighting heart disease). He set up the British Russian Hospice Society, a task for which he was particularly suited by his knowledge of the way Russian bureaucracy worked, and sent out teams of British nurses to train their Russian counterparts. The first Russian hospice was opened in St Petersburg, and another is soon to follow in Moscow.

Two years ago Victor Zorza discovered that his sister had survived the Holocaust and that for more than fifty years had been searching for her lost family. They were reunited in 1994. She survives him, as do his son and his companion for the last two years, Eileen. His marriage ended in divorce in 1992.

PROFESSOR SIR GRANVILLE BEYNON

Professor Sir Granville Beynon, FRS, physicist, died on March 11 aged 81. He was born on May 24, 1914.



A DISTINGUISHED physicist, Granville Beynon made notable contributions to studies of radio propagation and the ionosphere. He published some 60 papers and edited numerous volumes on the subject. His original work included one of the earliest measurements of motions in the F region — the region of the ionosphere where radio waves are reflected — and, with a colleague, A. H. Shapley, the first demonstration that a strange anomalously high absorption of radio waves in winter was related to abnormal warmings in the stratosphere.

Beynon was quick to recognise the potential of developing experimental techniques. This led him to be early in the field with observations of radio signals from artificial satellites. He carried out pioneering rocket experiments to determine the height distribution of electron density in the lower ionosphere. He was also one of the first to appreciate the versatility of the incoherent scatter technique — a technique whereby use is made of radio signals scattered by electrons.

In this context, Beynon was the prime mover in the development of the European Incoherent Scatter Facility (EISCAT), the most advanced incoherent scatter system in the world, situated in Scandinavia, for high latitude studies. He provided the main thrust in establishing a national radar facility at Aberystwyth to investigate small-scale movements in the middle atmosphere at temperate latitudes.

William John Granville Beynon was born at Dunvant, near Swansea, and educated locally, first at what was then Gower Grammar School and then at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. After the award of a PhD there, he joined the scientific staff of the radio

division of the National Physical Laboratory, Slough, in 1937, where he became the principal assistant to Professor (later Sir) Edward Appleton. This set the scene for Beynon's future direction of research, and started a collaboration which continued until Appleton's death in 1965.

Beynon returned to the University of Wales in 1946, where he remained for the rest of his working life, holding first a lectureship in physics and later, from 1958, the Chair of Physics at Aberystwyth. He retired in 1981.

In parallel with his research, Beynon increasingly applied his considerable administrative ability to international co-operation in science. He was heavily involved with the International Geophysical Year, a major geophysical enterprise over the sunspot maximum period, 1957-58, and even more with its sister programme called the International Quiet Sun Years over

the sunspot minimum period, 1964-65, for which he was president of the organising committee.

Beynon was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1973 and served as chairman or member of several of its committees. For his services to science and education he received many honours and awards, including the Goddard Prize of the National Space Club of America and the Chubb Medal of the Institute of Physics. He was appointed CBE in 1959 and was knighted in 1976.

Outside his work, he had a lifelong passion for classical music (especially that of Bach) and was himself an accomplished violin player. He was an energetic gardener, a wily opponent in a game of snooker and an accomplished and amusing teller of stories.

Granville Beynon is survived by his wife Megan, and by their daughter and two sons.

RENÉ CLÉMENT

René Clément, French film director, died on March 17 aged 82. He was born on March 18, 1913.

RENÉ CLÉMENT's career as a film director took a long time to get started, enjoying an intense but brief flowering, and then went into a long, willing decline. Even at his best, he belonged to the senior school of Marcel Carné, the sort of film-maker who could do a highly professional job with a good, literate script and a capable cast. But never quite — in the eyes of the Young Turks of *cahiers du cinéma* at least — did he make it into that inner circle of recognised auteurs, every one of whose works became automatically an expression of their own personal aesthetic and philosophy.

Unfortunately, during Clément's heyday and for some years afterwards, *cahiers du cinéma* were the final arbiters in France of which film-makers were intellectually in, and which were out. Consequently, no sooner had Clément impressed the world with *Les Jeux interdits* (1952), than the type of film which he represented dropped from fashionable regard and was relegated instead, with varying degrees of patronage or hostility, to the ranks of the stodgy, boring "cinéma de papa".

In addition, *Jeux interdits*, a story of children against a background of war, had somehow offended the French Government. It was rejected by the Cannes Film Festival and there was quite a fight before it could be shown at all. On the

other hand, it won the Golden Lion at the Venice Festival that year, and was given the Oscar as best foreign film in 1953, thus laying the foundations of Clément's international reputation.

Much of the rest of his film-making was done in the dangerous sphere of international coproduction, and sometimes suffered from the compromises and indecisions of the genre. Arguably he would have worked more comfortably, and put a more personal mark on his films, if he had remained more within the French cinema.

Certainly those of his works which have survived best are the most completely French, and the non-French elements are generally the weakest. In *Gervaise* (1956), for instance, a version of Zola's searing novel

L'Assommoir, what still impresses is the meticulous recreation of working-class Paris in the 1850s. But Maria Schell's sentimental performance in the title role has faded terribly though at the time it won her the best actress award at the Venice Festival and a Hollywood contract. *Barrage contre le Pacifique* (The Sea Wall, 1958) was the first filming of a Marguerite Duras novel and was visually and atmospherically impressive, but finally fell victim to its multilingual cast.

At least in its beginnings Clément's film-making could hardly have been more French. Born in Bordeaux, he originally set out to be an architect, studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, but had already started to make amateur shorts when he was 18.

When he was 20 his father died, and realising that he could not afford to continue with his architectural studies, he went into the cinema instead working, as opportunity offered, as a writer, cameraman and assistant director.

In 1936 he directed the young Jacques Tati in a comedy short, *Soigne ton gauche*. His political documentary *L'Arabie interdite*, made the next year, got him into all sorts of trouble, including being arrested three times. During the war he continued to make shorts, one of which, *Ceux du rail* (1942), prepared the way for his first feature film, *La Bataille du rail* (1946). This was a semi-documentary drama about the Resistance, using mainly non-professional actors, which placed him alongside the new Italian Neo-Realists rather than anyone else then working in France.

At about this time Clément was the founder, with the cameraman Henri Alekin and the screenwriter (later director) Colette Audry, of a cinema club which evolved into the immensely influential IDHEC film school. After working as technical director with Cocteau on *La Belle et la Bête* and Noël-Noël on *Le Père tranquille* (another story of the Resistance), in 1947 he made his first mainstream fiction film, *Les Matutins* (The Damned), set entirely on board a German submarine. Next he made *Au delà des grilles*, starring Jean Gabin and Isa Miranda, a love story set in Genoa for which Clément won the best director award at Cannes, Miranda



the best actress award, and the film an Oscar for best foreign film.

Then in 1952 came *Jeux interdits*, and Clément was for the moment the most fêted French director worldwide. He followed that with a film which had very little success at the time, but in retrospect

looks more and more like his masterpiece, *Knave of Hearts* (*Monieur Ripois*), an Anglo-French coproduction starring Gerard Philippe as a young Frenchman in London, was a black comedy which showed off the beauty of London and the attractions of such elegant English actresses as Joan

Greenwood and Valerie Hobson, all of whom fall prey to his practised continental charm.

After this peak most of Clément's subsequent career was a steady decline. His most famous later film was the three-hour French/American coproduction *Is Paris Burning?* (1966), a last return to the subject of the Resistance and the liberation of Paris, in which a nugget of grainy truth was swallowed in all-star casting and glossy production values. Probably his best later film was *Plein soleil* (Purple Noon, 1959), an adaptation of an ambiguous and decadent Patricia Highsmith novel in which Alain Delon was expertly cast as the charming, murderous hero, and Clément experimented mildly in New Wave techniques like the jump-cut. After *La Baby-Sitter* in 1975 Clément retired from film-making, content (or fairly content) to assume the role of elder statesman.

In 1984 he received an honorary César (the French equivalent of the Oscar) as a lifetime achievement award. Though his work has long been out of fashion, and to a large extent unseen, a recent reappearance of *Jeux interdits* left younger generations vociferously demanding where this great film had been kept hidden all their lives. Though many of his films will no doubt remain in the shadows, it is hard to imagine that his three or four best works will not reassume their place in the pantheon, just as the long unfashionable films of Marcel Carné have done.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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THE FAMINE IN RUSSIA

The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom have sent out an appeal for help on behalf of the sufferers from the famine which prevails at present in the region of the Volga. The following are extracts from their appeal:— Ten provinces — Kazan, Vyatka, Oufa, Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov, Perm, Tula, Tambov, and Ryazan — i.e., a territory covering thousands of square miles in the region of the river Volga, and partly in the centre of the Empire, are suffering from a worse failure of crops than any of the oldest inhabitants can remember. Not only have the spring and winter sowings of grain perished in most of the localities, but also vegetables and grass. Last year 35 millions of roubles were assigned by the Government for supplying the famishing population with seed, bread and fodder, but even at that time the needs of only six of the above-mentioned provinces were officially estimated at the same figure, so that four provinces were practically left unprotected. Since

ON THIS DAY

March 22, 1899

It was probably not the first, and certainly not the last, Russian famine. In some places starving people had sold even their clothing and household goods to buy food.

then the needs of the population have increased. Moreover, it must be clearly understood that official allowances of 35lb. of grain per month are given only to non-adults from two to 18, and to adults from 55 years of age, while, as a matter of fact, people of all ages are equally starving. The Red Cross Society, a semi-official benevolent institution, which is now organizing help for the famished peasantry, admits that at least 23 per cent. of all the sufferers have no prospect of getting any official assistance, and

must either be maintained by private charity or die. Scoury and typhus have already broken out in the Kazan, Samara, Oufa, and Voronezh provinces, while the children, deprived of milk through the loss of cattle and of wholesome bread, are dying at a fearful rate simply from exhaustion. Death, however, seems in only too many cases to be a welcome relief from a long series of every day, every minute, suffering. A member of the sanitary and medical staff sent by the Red Cross writes from the Kazan province: "The food of the population consists of a mixture which was formerly used as fodder for horses, but of which the population are now baking 'bread' for themselves. Leaves of raspberry bushes are being boiled like tea, and this decoction, unwholesome in every way, is being consumed with avidity." According to the same source of information, all that could be turned into money has been sold, so that the same gown is being worn for six months without change, without linen or underwear.



ARTS 33-35

Richard O'Brien invites audiences to join him in Hell



EDUCATION 36

Jack Straw and a fiery baptism in politics



SPORT 39-44

Hastings looking to play for more than kicks

HOW EFFICIENT IS YOUR COMPANY?
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY MARCH 22 1996

Exchange clears way for trading revolution

By Robert Miller

THE warring factions at the London Stock Exchange yesterday buried their differences and confirmed plans to introduce the most radical changes to the way shares are bought and sold since Big Bang in 1986.

The board of the Exchange said it had accepted a proposal from one of its steering committees to introduce a public limit order book in the FT-SE 100 stocks. The new electronic order-matching service, which will eliminate the spread between the buy and sell price for shares, could be extended to other stocks listed on the London Exchange if the initial pilot scheme proves successful.

The Stock Exchange said last night that the interests of private investors, as well as the major professional market players, would be safeguarded. Before the new system can be introduced, however, an extensive consultation exercise will have to be undertaken with market users and the various watchdogs that oversee City regulation.

The Exchange's board announced that there will be a second round of consultation beginning in May and timed to end in June. Spring 1997 is the earliest possible date pencilled in for introduction of the new order matching service.

Leading retail stockbrokers yesterday expressed reservations about the new system. Justin Urquhart Stewart, a director of Barclays Stockbrokers, said it would be unfortunate if brokers were caught out because they were trying to provide the best service for customers while trying to satisfy the new demands imposed on them by regulators. He also called for an "extensive education" campaign to explain how the new system would affect private clients.

David Jones, chief executive of Sharelink, the UK's largest retail stockbroker, said: "Our concern is that the trading system will become a hybrid one and we have already expressed our reservations in writing to the Commons Treasury Select Committee. Our main problem is that if we do follow the proposals as they are the UK is in serious danger of losing out on a great opportunity to become the world's leading capital market."

Giles Varley, director of markets development and marketing at the Stock Exchange, said: "This is a complex and important decision and we believe that further debate will help ensure that the final framework and detailed application will work for the whole market place."



Tony Greener is reviewing the possibility of a Guinness share buyback scheme but says talk of a major acquisition in the spirits trade is overdone

Caution as Guinness profits go flat

By Alasdair Murray

GUINNESS, the drinks company, struck a note of caution on prospects for this year as it unveiled a 4 per cent decline in 1995 profits to £576 million. Guinness blamed difficult market conditions and £69 million exceptional charges for the fall.

Tony Greener, chairman, held out the possibility of a share buyback this year, saying the company was reviewing its dividend and buyback strategies. But the market remained unimpressed and Guinness shares fell 11.5 p to 460.5p. Mr Greener also played down rumours that Guinness sought a major acquisition, describing talk of further consolidation in the spirits industry as "overplayed".

Turnover was flat at £4.68 billion, while the total dividend was raised 8 per cent to 14.9p. Operating profits in United Distillers, the spirits company, fell 4 per cent to £673 million. But Guinness Breweries Worldwide increased operating profits 5 per cent to £270 million. Guinness's share of the profits from its 34 per cent stake in Moët Hennessy, the drinks subsidiary of LVMH, was £111 million.

Guinness also revealed its marketing spend for the first time — £500 million last year. The company said expenditure on marketing would grow at "double digit" levels this year. A final dividend of 10.7p (9.9p) is payable on May 21.

Bernard Arnault, chairman of LVMH-Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Guinness's largest shareholder, said he had no plans to sell his company's 20 per cent stake. But M Arnault added that he wanted to see an improvement in Guinness shares. LVMH reported a 10.3 per cent growth in net income to Fr 4 billion. Net sales rose to Fr 29.7 billion, an increase of 6.5 per cent. Luxury products grew 16 per cent, outstripping wines and spirits, which fell 5 per cent.

Pennington, page 25

Tempos, page 26

Severn joins bidding for South West Water

By Christine Buckley

A BID war for South West Water, which has the highest water bills in the country and has been criticised for pouring water into the sea and separately contaminating supplies. He said: "The regulator and the Government must make sure that these amalgamations don't allow the companies to hide savings in the accounts so that the customers don't get their fair share of any savings that might occur."

A fight would be hotly contested not only on the price for the company but also on reductions in customer bills that the bidders would offer. Price cuts, already a prime consideration for the water regulator, will gain added political weight as a general election looms.

The move by Severn, which surprised many in the City, will also have to go before the MMC under the Water Industry Act so shareholders will see no firm offers on the table until late summer when the commission is likely to rule.

Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, yesterday pressed for customer benefits from the potential

takeover of South West which has the highest water bills in the country and has been criticised for pouring water into the sea and separately contaminating supplies. He said: "The regulator and the Government must make sure that these amalgamations don't allow the companies to hide savings in the accounts so that the customers don't get their fair share of any savings that might occur."

Price cuts of at least 15 per cent are thought to be inevitable if the regulator is to follow curbs applied to Lyonnaise des Eaux, the French utility which bought Northumbrian Water.

Both potential bidders will be under pressure to deliver price cuts not only to the customers of South West but also to their own. A move to introduce cuts for the South West without commensurate cuts for existing customers will be viewed by consumer

groups as the effective subsidy of one group of customers by another.

Severn, which said that its bid for South West would be all cash, said yesterday that it had planned its move for several months.

The two companies do not make the same geographical fit that Wessex is able to offer its southerly neighbour. But



Cocker, operations review

Severn, which is bigger than Wessex and with a gearing of 21 per cent should be able to command considerable cash resources to buy South West, says it could make substantial savings from improved management at its target company.

Alan Costin, finance director, said the intended acquisition formed part of a review of operations initiated last year by Vic Cocker when he became chief executive.

Wessex said it was "pleased that Severn Trent agrees with Wessex about the benefits to customers and shareholders of combining South West Water in a larger organisation."

South West, which rejected the first advance by Wessex as unwelcome, yesterday repeated that response and told its shareholders that both offers were unsolicited, unwelcome and did not constitute a firm offer for the company.

Keith Court, the chairman

Thames turns tide of diversification

By Christine Buckley

THAMES WATER yesterday took a knife to businesses that have lost the company £70 million in the past six years in a sweeping disposal programme that cost the job of the chief executive.

Mike Hoffman, who was largely responsible for the much-criticised diversification strategy of the utility, left yesterday while his severance was still being negotiated. He is expected to take a pay-off of at least £500,000 after the company made a one-off

charge of £95 million for disposing of overseas businesses that Mr Hoffman helped to introduce to the London company's portfolio.

Nine businesses, mostly overseas, are being sold and about 500 jobs are expected to go as Thames moves to refocus on its core water utility functions. The bulk of job losses will occur overseas, although Thames is also reorganising some UK functions as part of the streamlining.

Mr Hoffman's position will

not be filled. The company will be headed by Sir Robert Clarke, non-executive chairman since last year. He becomes executive chairman, while Bill Alexander, managing director of the Thames Water Utilities division, becomes managing director for all the company's operations.

David Luftman, finance director, admitted that the businesses that are up for sale were mistaken purchases. Assets are being written down to the tune of £50

million on the businesses as Thames expects to get less than their book value. It is putting £30 million of goodwill associated with the operations through the profit and loss account as accounting standards dictate. The further £15 million making up the £95 million charge will cover reorganisation costs.

The company's shake-out was well received in the City with many utilities analysts calling it overdue. Shares in Thames rose 17p to 575p.

Inflation falls to a 15-month low

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

BRITAIN'S headline inflation rate fell to its lowest level for 15 months in February, largely because of cheaper mortgages but also because of the petrol price war between supermarkets.

The headline rate eased to 2.7 per cent, from 2.9 per cent in January. However, the underlying rate, the Government's target, edged up to 2.9 per cent, from 2.8 per cent, reflecting price rises for food, personal goods and leisure goods. RPI, the inflation measure that excludes mortgage interest payments and indirect taxes, remained 2.5 per cent.

The City had expected the underlying rate to fall with

headline inflation and there was some disappointment. However, the deterioration is not deemed large enough to prevent another quarter-point cut in base rates within the next few months. The Treasury said: "Inflation continues to remain low. The underlying cost pressures remain weak."

Some analysts said that consumer demand may now be strong enough to let retailers rebuild margins a little. Others argued that various indicators of inflation have weakened sharply and that wage growth remains subdued, making it hard to see inflation taking off in the high street.

Pennington, page 25

MMC caps classifieds in BT's Yellow Pages

By Eric Reguly

THE Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) recommended yesterday that price controls be placed on the classified advertising rates charged by the Yellow Pages after concluding that the business, one of BT's most profitable, had exploited its monopoly position.

The findings, which were accepted by the Department of Trade and Industry, means that advertising rates will have to fall by 2 per cent a year in real terms for a three-year period starting in the autumn. John Condon, managing director of the Yellow Pages, was "disappointed" with the price cap but said it would not

necessarily lead to a decline in operating profits. They "just won't rise as fast," he said. Operating profits were £139 million on sales of £338 million in 1994-95 and the return on sales was a lofty 41 per cent. Advertising rates have been raised by 4.5 per cent a year since the early 1990s. Mr Condon said efficiency gains, including expansion into new businesses such as electronic and on-line publishing, would allow the company to cope with the price cap.

The Yellow Pages must also publish financial accounts that are separate from BT and stop publishing more than one directory in a given market

area, an order that will effectively eliminate its local directories. Advertisers triggered the MMC inquiry when they complained that the Yellow Pages had raised advertising rates except in areas where it was competing directly with local directories.

Thomson Directories, the US West division that is the main competitor to Yellow Pages, said it was generally pleased with the MMC's findings but said that the price cap, which will not apply to Thomson, may reduce competition instead of opening up the market.

Pennington, page 25

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Mr/Ms/Miss Address Postcode

Daytime Tel. No. Delivery: please allow 28 days

Short Bros confirms plan to shed jobs

By ROSS TREMAN
INDUSTRIAL
CORRESPONDENT

SHORT BROTHERS has confirmed plans to shed 800 workers who made wings and other parts for Fokker, the collapsed Dutch aircraft-maker, and warned that 300 more could go unless government aid was available to retrain them.

Although only 300 compulsory redundancies are expected, a further 250 volunteers are expected, while 540 temporary workers will not be re-employed.

The job cuts, by the biggest private sector employer in Northern Ireland, will hit hard in a community already suffering an unemployment rate of 11.9 per cent, the highest in the United Kingdom.

Receivers are expected to order the completion of only 12 or 15 jet and turboprop airliners left on Fokker's production line. Output of the Fokker 70 64-seat jet and its big sister, the 110-seat Fokker 100, had been running at about 40 aircraft a year.

The job cuts will affect nearly a fifth of Short Brothers workforce in Belfast. The company hopes government help may be available to retrain some employees for other work on new programmes.

Bombardier is said to be in talks with administrators in Amsterdam about a possible takeover of the Fokker aircraft maintenance business, which provides after-market support for airlines. Saab Aircraft of Sweden confirmed discussions about parts of the Fokker business.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.08	1.92
Austria Sch	15.96	15.48
Belgium Fr	65.55	65.35
Canada \$	2.189	2.039
Cyprus Cyp£	0.754	0.689
Denmark Kr	9.58	8.58
Finland Mk	7.82	6.97
France Fr	8.18	7.53
Germany Dm	2.42	2.21
Greece Dr	361.00	366.00
Hong Kong S	12.53	11.33
Ireland P£	1.02	0.94
Israel S£	5.1400	4.9001
Italy Lit	2488.00	2343.00
Japan Yen	177.50	161.90
Malta	0.593	0.538
Netherlands Gld	2.693	2.483
New Zealand \$	2.30	2.17
Norway Kr	10.45	9.85
Portugal Esc	246.50	227.00
Spain Ptas	166.00	155.00
Sweden Kr	10.85	10.03
Switzerland Fr	1.57	1.70
Turkey Lira	1110.00	1030.00
USA \$	1.634	1.504

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



David Kendall, chairman of Blagden Industries, joins Richard Searle, chief executive, and David Roach, finance director, in looking to the next phase of development after the steel drum, chemicals and protective equipment group, returned to the dividend list with a 2p final payout. It reported pre-tax profits of £9.06 million in the year to December 31, against a provision-driven loss of £5.6 million last time

British Gas seeks new TransCo price formula

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BRITISH GAS yesterday drew further battle lines between its pipeline business and the industry regulator, who is close to imposing pricing curbs on TransCo, the profitable distribution arm.

The company, whose chairman, Richard Giordano, has said that a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission over TransCo's pricing is almost inevitable, is pushing for a different pricing formula and a shake-up of the regulatory constraints operating on it. The decision on the five-year pricing programme,

which will be announced in the next few months by Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, will be worth billions to the company.

Ms Spottiswoode has indicated that a tough price cap, based on the inflation-linked RPI-X, is likely.

British Gas said that it wanted to see the X fall to less than five — the current curb on TransCo. Philip Rogerson, executive director, said that five was far too onerous and the company would be seeking less than that to meet operating costs and to facilitate

capital investment. TransCo expects a decrease in total capital expenditure at 1994 prices, from £886 million in 1997 to £716 million in 2004. It said: "Total expenditure over the period is projected to amount to £6.6 billion, 58 per cent of which relates to expenditure required to maintain the existing carrying capacity, and the balance to investment in new carrying capacity."

But the company argues that there will be a marked jump in costs on the full introduction of competition into the domestic market, with

TransCo having to bill and handle the accounts of a range of new gas suppliers separately.

Mr Rogerson also said that British Gas wanted a pricing structure that included profit-sharing, so that some of its cash would be returned to customers — the gas shippers that use the network — and shareholders. The move is under discussion with Ofgas.

The regulator, which yesterday published its progress report on the TransCo pricing negotiations, said that a decision would soon be made on whether profit-sharing could be introduced.

British Gas underlined the gulf between itself and the regulator by calling for a public contract between the two parties and arbitration in the event of disputes. Harry Moulson, managing director of TransCo, said arbitration would prove a swifter method of solving disputes than an MMC referral, which is the only current form of appeal other than a judicial review.

Ogas said that the first proposals on TransCo will be published on May 6, with the final recommendations available publicly on July 15.

Thornton takes over at Laura Ashley

By SARAH BAGNALL

THE relationship between Laura Ashley and Goldman Sachs intensified yesterday when the clothing and furnishings group announced the appointment of John Thornton, a partner at the American bank, as chairman to replace Lord Hooson, who retires in May.

Goldman Sachs is already the retailer's financial adviser, having replaced Lazards last September shortly after the arrival of Ann Iverson as chief executive at Laura Ashley.

Furthermore, until recently Mr Thornton was adviser to Sir Bernard Ashley, widower of the company's founder and owner of 34 per cent of the shares. He relinquished this role when he was appointed a non-executive director of the retailer last July.

Ms Iverson has known Mr Thornton for several years because Goldman Sachs is adviser to Storehouse, Ms Iverson's previous employer.

It is understood that Ms Iverson employed the services of Goldman Sachs during negotiations over her appointment at Laura Ashley, which resulted in a package worth £3.4 million in pay, benefits and bonuses over three years if a series of performance targets are hit.

Tempus, page 26

GM in strike agreement

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

THE strike that has shut down most of General Motors, the world's largest car maker, for 17 days appears to be at an end with an agreement between the company and the United Auto Workers. The deal will be put to a workers' vote today.

The agreement, the details of which were not disclosed by the company, will allow the 3,000 workers at two brake plants in Dayton, Ohio, who

originally went out on strike to return to work. The decision will enable GM to reopen the 26 factories forced to close because of the walkout. The brake workers had been worried about job security because of moves by the company to contract some of its work to outside companies.

The strike crippled GM's North American operations, forcing 176,000 into idleness, and caused countless workers

in supply companies across America to be laid off. Analysts said that it would have cost GM about \$2.5 billion in lost production and at least twice that in the industries that supply the company. As well as devastating production figures of the US car industry for the first quarter of this year, the shutdown will have knocked about a third off total US industrial output for the quarter, economists estimate.

Building society payouts to be taxed

By ANNE ASHWORTH

PAYMENTS made to the savers and borrowers of building societies that convert or merge are to be subject to tax, either as capital gains or as income, it was announced yesterday. The Inland Revenue ruling has implications for the 18 million members of societies in the process of converting to banks, or being taken over.

The Inland Revenue said also that cashbacks, sweeteners of as much as £10,000 offered by societies and other lenders to make their mortgages more attractive would be free of tax. This is a change of heart: previously the taxman had said that each scheme would be assessed separately.

The Halifax, the Alliance & Leicester and the Woolwich

are set to become banks next year, while the National & Provincial is being swallowed by the Abbey National. The Cheltenham & Gloucester passed into the control of Lloyds Bank last year in a deal giving cash payouts as large as £14,000. Such payments will be subject to capital gains.

The Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester members are to be given free shares which will also attract capital gains tax, but only when they are sold. In both cases, individuals can reduce their bills by using their annual capital gains tax exemption of £6,000 (£6,300 from April).

Members of a society merging with another will have to pay income tax on their payments.

Dresdner Bank search

PUBLIC prosecutors in Germany yesterday revealed that tax officers had searched Dresdner Bank's main office in Hamburg and several branches. Prosecutor Ruediger Bagger declined to give details about the search, saying the investigation was continuing. It is the sixth big raid in a two-year investigation at Germany's second largest bank. Employees at the bank have been suspected of aiding clients in avoiding tax payments by moving funds abroad.

Manders fights slump

SHARES of Manders fell 12p to 313p yesterday after the international coatings and printing inks specialist said that its markets remain depressed and selling prices are under intense pressure. Roy Amos, chairman, said sales in the first two months of the current year were in line with 1995. He expressed confidence in achieving organic growth in 1996. In 1995 pre-tax profits rose 4 per cent to £12.3 million. A final dividend of 8.4p lifts the total to 11.5p from 11p.

Logica wins CAA deal

LOGICA, the computer services group, is today expected to announce it has won a £3.5 million consultancy contract from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Logica has signed a deal with the CAA to provide strategic consultancy for the research and development directorate of the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) over a two-year period. As leader of the ATC Research Consortium, Logica will support research into the development of future air traffic control concepts.

CBI finds a slump in orders

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

MANUFACTURING orders are at their lowest for well over two years, according to evidence today from the Confederation of British Industry.

However, companies' expectations for output growth remain high, the CBI says in its latest monthly industrial trends survey.

City analysts will see such low levels of orders as further evidence for another interest rate cut, though Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, expects the economy to pick up towards the end of the year.

Looking at more than 1,000 manufacturing companies, the CBI's survey for March shows that manufacturers'

total order books weakened again, and are now at their lowest for a monthly CBI survey since December 1993.

The net balance of firms reporting order books below normal was -15 per cent in March, slightly worse than the -14 per cent last month and the -13 per cent in January, and continuing a downward trend that began last September.

Overseas demand also weakened. Export order books are now running at their lowest level for two years, since March 1994, and are now considered below normal by a net balance of 5 per cent of companies surveyed. This compares with a

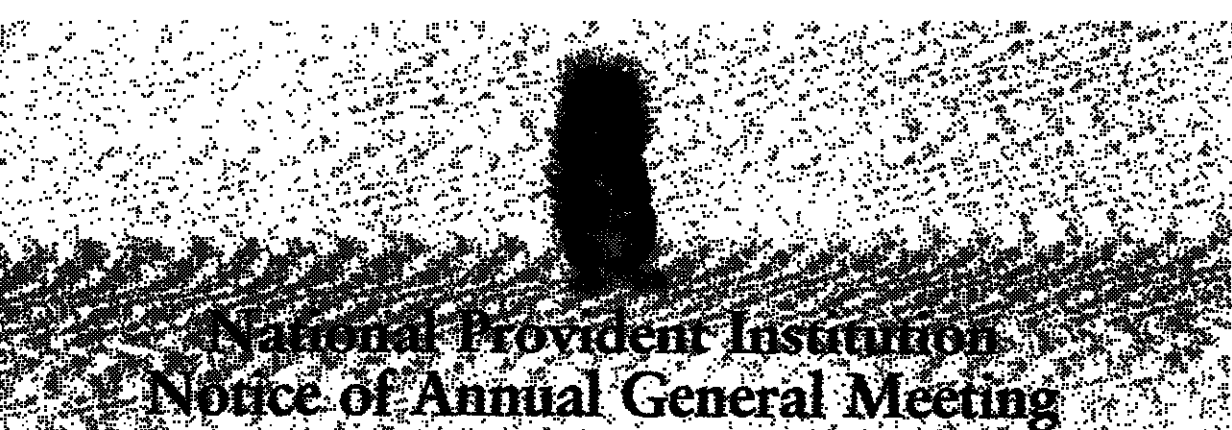
positive balance of 1 per cent last month.

Such demand is not reflected in the relative optimism in manufacturers' expectations on output growth. A net 24 per cent expect output to rise, against 20 per cent last month and 16 per cent in January.

Sudhir Junankar, CBI associate economic analysis director, says that the pick-up on output expectations suggests growing short-term confidence among companies, but adds: "With firms also continuing to report excessive stocks of finished goods, the output optimism seen in this survey could be more fragile than companies expect."



Turner forecasts pick-up



National Provident Institution Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 160th Annual General Meeting of members of National Provident Institution will be held at the City Conference Centre, 76 Mark Lane, London EC3, on Wednesday, 17 April 1996, at 12.00 noon, for the transaction of the following ordinary business:

- * To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 1995;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Mr A C Barker;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Mr J D Carter;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Baroness Hogg;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Mr L J Martin;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Mr D J M Roberts;
 - * To reappoint as a Director, Mr J J H Wormell.
- (All of the above Directors are members of the Remuneration Committee)
- * To reappoint Coopers & Lybrand as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to determine their remuneration;
 - * To increase the upper limit of each Non-Executive Director's basic fee to £25,000 per annum, and subject to this limit, to authorise the Directors to determine the rate of the basic fee.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD: Steven O'Brien, Company Secretary.
Principal Office: National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2UE.

NOTE: A member entitled to attend and vote at the general meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, to vote instead of him or her. A proxy need not be a member of NPI. Proxy forms are available on request from the Company Secretary at the Principal Office. Completed proxy forms must be deposited at the Principal Office not later than 12 noon on 15 April 1996.



PROVIDING PENSIONS SINCE 1835

If you would like a copy of NPI's Report and Accounts 1995, write to John Fisher, NPI, GV02C, National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2UE

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

□ Top men leave a water industry at low ebb □ Power struggle that holds key to inflation □ Stock Exchange takes the plunge

Out at the deep end

LAST summer Mike Hoffman was the shiny, bright face of the water industry. While he was touring the offices of opinion formers spreading the gospel, Trevor Newton was holed up in Yorkshire, the dirty face of the industry, trying not to use any of the precious stuff to wash in. This week they were as one as the unacceptable faces of an industry that might not be able to supply 18 million households this year, whether we have the worst drought for 401 years or not.

Thames Water announced yesterday that Mr Clean is to leave his post as chief executive under a rain cloud while Mr Dirty said on Monday that he was going to take an early bath.

At Thames, where the proud boast — shouted loud by Mr Hoffman — was that there were no water restrictions last summer or any recent summer since its ring main was operational, Mr Hoffman, an engineer at heart, is now surplus to requirements. The company will not need a chief executive any more and will not be seeking a replacement.

What Thames, Yorkshire and all the other water companies need is someone to make them bid-proof. As Severn Trent was telling the Stock Exchange that it too wants to bid for South West Water, the company that managed to lose a reservoir and separately poison

customers paying the highest water bills in the country. Thames was taking a £95 million one-off hit. This, remarkably, included £30 million of goodwill, a commodity that many thought had run out long ago in the industry. Thames is now to stick to its core utility business — no more forays into India and other far-flung places to try to teach water preservation and distribution. Nine businesses are being sold after costing £26 million in losses last year.

Yorkshire might also try this novel approach of ensuring that all its customers have water delivered to their home without restriction and without the use of tankers instead of trying to sell its expertise abroad. Northumbrian, provider of the water that kept Yorkshire afloat, has already fallen to the French.

The battle between Wessex, Severn Trent and whoever else decides to take a pop at South West Water is likely to be lengthy as the Monopolies and Mergers Commission ponders whether customers will be disadvantaged by having their water supplied by a giant instead of a minnow.

Meanwhile, the Water Services Association loses its chairman in Mr Hoffman, and must seek a new honest face to explain why we will not have enough water this summer unless we have a miserable wet spring. The answer will have nothing to do with leaking pipes not being repaired, nor lack of capital investment. The need for universal water meters, and the heavy investment that would require from the companies is also likely to be avoided, as the industry does not want to pay.

But whoever gets the job should be in line for a big pay off sooner or later.

Underlying gloom

IT IS a mark of how good Britain's inflation performance has been over the past couple of years that a tiny rise in the underlying rate yesterday was greeted with resignation and gloom in the City: gloom because it is obvious, isn't it, that inflation is coming back with a vengeance; resignation because Kenneth



Clarke is going to cut interest rates again anyway to close the opinion poll gap.

In fact, there was lots of good news on the inflation front in yesterday's figures and in statisticians' view of the outlook in the months ahead. There was precious little bounce back in prices for clothing and footwear and household goods in February after record-breaking price discounts in the January sales. The annual rate of services inflation fell to 2.1 per cent, the same level as in December. But the rate in both these months was the lowest since May 1986.

And the supermarket price wars continue. The major chains are daggers drawn on petrol and there are more price cuts to

come. There is still fierce competition too on selected food brands. Tinned baked beans, we are told, is the next big fight looming. Washing up liquid is another field of battle. And, in the months to come, there will be more good news on the mortgage front. This reflects not only a drive by lenders to restart the housing market but the intensifying ideological battle lines being drawn between mutualism and public and bank ownership of building societies.

Prospects for inflation depend crucially on whether we are finally beginning to see a shift in the balance of power between consumers and retailers. Up to now, the recovery has seen the consumer absolutely dominant over hard-pressed retailers. Every time retailers have been tempted to raise their prices, the consumer has promptly walked away. Yesterday's figures were seen by some in the City as the first tentative sign that consumers have become confident enough to accept modest price increases. Others guess that the price rises, as so often before in this recovery, will not stick.

The answer to these questions rest in consumer psychology and that is a notoriously difficult science to master.

Order matching ahoj

NO ONE (let alone an incumbent chief executive) can ever be quite sure what a Stock Exchange board meeting might portend but, mercifully, the outcome of yesterday's gathering was much in line with recent market intelligence.

The brave new world of "order matching" trading, in contrast to the traditional "quote driven" system, is on the way, albeit somewhat later than Michael Lawrence, the Stock Exchange's former chief executive, originally envisaged. Last November, the message was that order driven trading would arrive in August when Sequence VI, the new electronic trading platform, goes live. Sequence VI remains on schedule but the introduction of order matching has been postponed until the spring of 1997, pending a "final decision".

The Stock Exchange has always been coy about how many stocks would be covered by the system favoured by some, but by no means all, end users. After dwelling on the top 350 companies, the Tower has finally settled for the FT-SE 100 counters, with an option to extend coverage.

This, in turn, will be combined with "block trading" which will permit "large players" to continue to take risks and commit capital. For "large players" read the market-makers who, as before, will provide liquidity at a price.

Talks with the Treasury, the SIB, the OFT and the SFA start shortly. Precious little has been said about the benefits or otherwise for the private investor, a factor that the authorities might wish to bear in mind.

Hard sell

Overcharging by JR Hartley should be the next book to be promoted by those few television advertisements for Yellow Pages. Yesterday the BT subsidiary, renowned for helping us find the better things in life, was rapped by the Monopolies Commission for acting against the public interest in overcharging for its advertisements and exploiting its monopoly position. Not quite the values extolled by Mr Hartley.

BET targets £142m to foil Rentokil

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BET yesterday hit back at Rentokil's £1.9 billion takeover bid, forecasting a 28 per cent increase in full-year profits at £142 million before tax.

BET shares rose 3p to close at 203p, their highest level since the bid was launched last month as the City speculated Rentokil would now have to return with a higher offer. Rentokil shares rose also, by 6.5p to 354p, valuing the bid at 198p a share. Yesterday Rentokil shareholders voted in favour of the bid at an extraordinary meeting.

BET promised a dividend forecast for 1997 by the close of the bid period and repeated its commitment to raise the dividend by 27.5 per cent to 5.1p a share for the year ended March 1996. The company also predicted a 10 per cent increase in group turnover to £1.94 billion.

John Clark, chief executive, said: "This is tangible proof that BET is delivering on promises. These results demonstrate that BET has an exciting independent future and that Rentokil's offer is wholly inadequate." Sir Chris-

topher Harding, chairman, further described the Rentokil bid as reminiscent of a 1980s conglomerate bid with little overlap, strategy or value.

But Clive Thompson, Rentokil chief executive, said: "If this is the best the BET board can do, we continue to wonder why it doesn't recommend our offer." Rentokil claimed the profit forecast was barely above previously forecast levels and did not contain the 10 per cent uplift the market had been anticipating. Rentokil now has until Easter to increase its offer, with analysts forecasting a bid would need to be pitched at about 220p a share.

BET concentrated its fire on Rentokil's 179.5p cash offer. The sum represents a price earnings multiple of 16.6 times forecast earnings a share and stood at a 32 per cent discount to Rentokil's own market rating. The company also pointed out the offer price valued the BET element of a merged group as only 33 per cent of the total, although BET would be providing 42 per cent of the profit.

Tempos, page 26

Irish Life to offer new deals

By MARIANNE CURPHY

IRISH LIFE is to spend £10 million to contact 110,000 policyholders whose unlinked savings plans have produced disappointing returns to offer them alternative investments.

Each policy's return will be assessed individually and savers, most of whom bought their plan in the late 1980s and 1990s, will be given the chance to switch to a product giving a guaranteed return.

Irish Life, Ireland's largest life assurance company, announced yesterday it had increased its embedded value earnings, or profits, by 22 per cent in 1995 to £1.69 million. New business (premium income) rose by 8 per cent to £1.405 million.

Earnings rose from £1.122p a share to £1.139 and the total dividend is £1.402p, up from £1.298p.

The shares closed with a gain of 3p to 263p.

APV goes back into the black

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

APV, maker of food and drink processing equipment, reported a return to profit yesterday, demonstrating the benefits of a restructuring programme launched in January last year.

Sir Peter Cazale, chairman, announced he will retire on September 30. He will be succeeded by Mike Smith, an executive director of BTR until last September.

APV made a pre-tax profit of £26.9 million last year, compared with a loss of £18.2 million. The improvement reflects higher margins and earnings from disposals. The company said its increased profitability should make up for a 5 per cent fall in the value of orders received in the first two months of this year.

Final restructuring this and next year meant an exceptional charge of £10.5 million for 1995 compared with £32.5 million. There is an unchanged full-year dividend of 2.7p.

Tempos, page 26

Grattan stake sold

By MARTIN BARROW

THE 15 per cent stake in Grattan, the catalogue and mail order business, owned by Fine Art Developments, the UK greeting card company, is being sold to Otto Versand, the German retail group, for about £25 million.

Fine Art will receive an initial consideration of £12.2 million later this month, with the balance due in March next year.

The Grattan interest was acquired by Fine Art during 1991 and 1992, and the cost of the investment was £12.02 million. The proceeds of the

sale will be used to reduce bank borrowings. Shares in Fine Art rose 1p to 429p yesterday.

Fine Art, which sells a wide range of merchandise through mail order catalogues, saw profits stagnate at £38 million before tax in the last full financial year and has been exploring ways to develop the business in the face of difficult trading conditions.

In the first half of the current year, the company reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £6.2 million, from £5.78 million.

THERE'S ALL THIS AMAZING STUFF YOU READ ABOUT IN THE PAPER. CONVERGENCE, NEURAL NETWORKS, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Severn joins Wessex in battle for South West

THE water companies provided a fair sprinkling of interest for City speculators as the prospect of a battle for control of South West Water loomed large. After months of inactivity they are showing signs of springing back into life, with a number expected to suffer the same fate as the regional electricity companies.

Shares of South West Water, its rival, slung its hat into the ring by announcing that it is seeking regulatory approval to launch a bid. South West is already the subject of an approach from Wessex Water, its next-door neighbour.

Last night City speculators were licking their lips at the prospect of an auction developing. They claim the terms from Wessex are likely to value the deal at around £700 million. Severn has already indicated that any bid it makes for SWW is likely to be made up entirely of cash.

Both predators must now wait to see if they will be given the all-clear to make a move. The general view is that the bids will receive the go-ahead, but that the regulator may demand certain conditions are met. Wessex finished up cheaper at 33p, while Severn Trent dropped 2p to 61p.

Elsewhere in the sector, Thames Water stood out with a rise of 1p to 57p as the City gave the thumbs-up to wide-ranging proposals aimed at restructuring the group.

Thames intends to refocus on its core utility operations and international projects, but it is withdrawing from design and construction. The move is expected to cost the group £45 million in write-offs. Michael Hoffman has resigned as chief executive.

There was selective support for the other water companies, with Southern advancing 24p to 74p, Welsh Water 5p to 74p, and Yorkshire 1p to 65p.

The rest of the equity market succeeded in breaching the 3,700 level, albeit briefly, having reached a high for the day of 3,725. The FT-SE 100 index finished 124 points up at 3,693 despite a lacklustre performance by the bond market and an opening fall of more than 30 points by the Dow Jones average on Wall Street. In all, 842 million shares changed hands.

Vodafone was a firm market, rising 3p to 248p ahead of the deadline. Later today, of



Some water companies could find themselves reshaped

the Orange retail offer. The imminent flotation of Orange has crystallised the value of the other mobile phone operators and led to some of them being rerated.

Full-year figures from Guinness received a lukewarm reception from brokers, with the shares nursing a fall of 11p to 40p. Trading conditions in the drinks industry remain difficult, with the group having to suffer patchy demand and rising advertising and market expenditure.

This was reflected in a pre-tax profit shortfall of £39 million at 58.6 million. Brokers say it is difficult to get excited about prospects for Guinness in the current year.

Ladbroke continued to attract speculative support, with the price firming 3p to 190p.

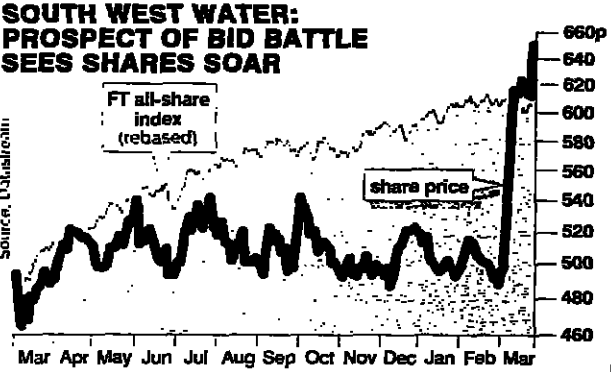
Recent talk in the market-place has suggested a full bid from either Bass, which already owns the Holiday Inn chain, or the Hilton Hotel Group in the US. Now there is a suggestion that Scottish & Newcastle, 4p lighter at 64p, may link up with Hilton and buy the group's chain of betting shops, leaving Hilton with the hotels.

After reaching a new high of 507p earlier this week, Rank Organisation closed last night 8p down at 499p as turnover reached more than two million shares. Word is that County NatWest, the broker, has turned bearish and feels the shares are due for a correction.

BET has fired off another salvo in its effort to remain independent. As part of its attempt to fend off Rentokil's £1.8 billion bid, it is forecasting a near 30 per cent rise in profits and dividends. Pre-tax profits are set to rise from £111 million to £142 million. Shareholders are to be rewarded with a 51p dividend.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 3 per cent 2015 hardened 1/4c to 97 1/4c, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 1/4c better at 102 1/4c.

NEW YORK: Wall Street went into what one investment strategist described as neutral mode and shares were mixed. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 13.73 points at 5,641.69.



up from 4p last time. It described the Rentokil bid as "wholly inadequate".

Brokers say the hot money is banking on a win for Rentokil. They claim a modest increase in the terms to around 215p a share would guarantee victory. Rentokil responded with a rise of 6p to 354p, valuing the terms for Rentokil at 197.5p. BET finished 3p firmer at 203p.

There was a clutch of companies making their stock market debut. The biggest was Fulmar, the contract printer, which was launched by Mike Taylor, chief executive, at the height of the miners' strike in the 1970s with the help of a £4,000 loan.

After being offered at 154p, the shares started life yesterday at 183p and ended the session at 189p, a healthy premium of 28p. At these levels, the group is capitalised at £38.2 million. Almost three million shares were traded.

First-time dealings in Triad, the software systems consultant, also got off to a positive start following a placing at 135p. The shares opened at 173p before closing at a peak of 178p, a premium of 43p, capitalising the company at around £45 million.

Silver Shield, the wind-screen replacement specialist, opened at 3p before settling at 33p.

GILT-EDGED: Prices marked time for much of the session with investors apparently reluctant to continue chasing the market higher. Dealers say the London market continues to reflect bond movements in the US, where the recent strong run shows signs of coming to a halt.

The latest inflation numbers were much in line with forecasts and did little to influence investors one way or the other. In the futures market, the June series of the Long Gilt made little headway firming just a tick to close at 105 1/4c with a total of 48,000 contracts completed.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 3 per cent 2015 hardened 1/4c to 97 1/4c, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 1/4c better at 102 1/4c.

NEW YORK: Wall Street went into what one investment strategist described as neutral mode and shares were mixed. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 13.73 points at 5,641.69.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5641.69 (+13.73)
S&P Composite 650.36 (+0.38)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 20727.53 (+284.93)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 11027.96 (+191.43)

Amsterdam:
EOE Index 527.21 (+0.51)

Sydney:
AO 2262.9 (+13.5)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2504.12 (+18.22)

Singapore:
General 2422.80 (+38.84)

Brussels:
General 6750.07 (+27.12)

Paris:
CAC-40 2146.99 (+7.10)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 765.30 (+1.90)

London:

FT 30 3769.3 (+12.9)

FT 100 3698.2 (+12.9)

FTSE Mid 250 4297.4 (+15.2)

FTSE-A 350 1860.5 (+6.8)

FTSE Eurotrack 100 1610.28 (+1.98)

FT A All-Share 1839.8 (+6.12)

FT Non Financials 1839.8 (+6.12)

FT Financials 110.89 (+0.21)

FT Govt Secs 42.06 (+0.21)

Bargains 4076

SEAQ Volume 642,000

US\$ 205.87 (+0.60)

German Mark 2.247 (+0.0001)

Exchange Index 84.0 (same)

Bank of England official close (HPI)

ESDR 1.0505

RPI 150.4 Feb (2.7%) Jan 1995=100

RPIX 150.2 Feb (2.9%) Jan 1995=100

RECENT ISSUES

BZW Eq (Bmrd) A 514 - 2

Clubhaus Wts 3 -

Freepages (12) 14 -

Fulmar (154) 186 -

IOC Int 100 -

Int Tech Tst C (100) 100 -

Life Off Opps (100) 52 -

M & G Equity Cap 22 -

M & G Equity Div 90 -

M & G Equity Inc 43 -

Macdonald Htl (145) 190 + 1

Marine & Merc (125) 125 -

Perp Inc Gth Ut (500) 500 -

Primary Htl (100) 103 - 2

Saracen Value C 97 -

Schroder UK G Ut 25 -

Silver Shield (120) 33 -

Stadium Group (130) 37 - 4

Streamline (180) 175 -

Triad Group (135) 174 -

Visual Action (185) 242 + 10

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Tomlinsons 234p (-26p)

Blagden 160p (+14p)

Bcom Comp 160p (+16p)

Wessex 210p (-22p)

REA 210p (-15p)

Young 'A' 550p (-37p)

Nth Foods 204p (-10p)

Whetman 388p (-19p)

Visual Action 242p (+10p)

Smithline 884p (+23p)

Andrew Sykes 255p (+10p)

South West 64p (+6p)

Close Bros 388p (-10p)

Abbott Mead 569p (-15p)

Siebe 853p (+19p)

Morgan Cble 428p (+14p)

Man Ltd 260p (+9p)

Br Land 392p (+9p)

Nat Express 488p (+9p)

Quora Wellcome 819p (+14p)

REXAM 582p (+12p)

FALLS:

Go-Ahead 309p (-35p)

Metal 398p (-17p)

Manders 313p (-12p)

Tibbet & Britn 428p (-15p)

BOC 888p (-17p)

GUS 670p (-10p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Good for Guinness?

GUINNESS seems to have taken its latest advertising slogan — "Not everything in black and white makes sense" — too literally. Guinness prides itself on its marketing wizardry and chose yesterday to reveal to the world for the first time just how much it is spending on those tricky ads for the black brew and on other drink promotions. However, the £500 million that the company poured into stunts such as St Patrick's Day parties and the "Red Hot, Red Label" whisky campaign in Latin America did little to detract attention from a shrinking bottom line.

Guinness did provide evidence that better performance from the Johnnie Walker whisky brands was a direct result of increased marketing spend over the past few years. However, the general impression is that Guinness is spending a lot of money just to

stand still. The lukewarm trading statement gave little indication that allocating a bigger budget to the men in ponytails this year would greatly improve performance, and market forecasts were trimmed to around 1980 million.

It is not just Guinness that is suffering in a fickle global drinks market, and compared to many of its rivals, the company is in good shape. Guinness believes that the industry is at a watershed, with huge investment needed to build leading brands in the mature Western markets and to get a foothold in developing economies. In the meantime, strong cash flow means that shareholders will not go empty-handed and could be rewarded with a share buy-back. And if the company's analysis is correct, Guinness will reap the benefits of its marketing spend in the medium term.

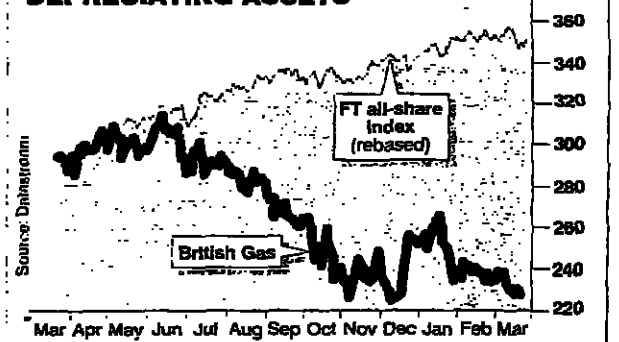
British Gas

BRITISH GAS investors are left none the wiser after Transco's submission to Ofgas yesterday. Capital expenditure and depreciation forecasts confirmed that the company will still be writing down its pipeline assets at a higher rate than it invests well into the next century. That is already a bone of contention between Transco and the shippers who contend that the pipelines system is worth about a third of the £18 billion price tag from which Transco is writing off some £900 million per year. Ofgas would like to see some of the cash being of lower levels of investment come back to the consumer but so far is remaining coy about whether or not it accepts Transco's valuation of the assets. The company is vehemently defending share-

holders' right to the cash. It is scarcely surprising that Ofgas prefers the "pay as you go" approach to capex to Transco's smoothing of the cost over decades. By the time renewal of the pipeline network becomes a live issue, free competition will have removed most of the controversy over the pricing of gas to consumers.

The irony in all this is that pipelines represent only 40 per cent of the cost of gas to households. Were the oil companies to renegotiate their take or pay contracts with British Gas, some 5p per therm could be passed on to consumers, reducing bills by almost 10 per cent. However, oil companies are free agents; only Transco is regulated.

DEPRECIATING ASSETS



APV

NEIL FRENCH has delivered all that the APV board could have expected of him when he stepped in as chief executive in October 1994. At the processing engineering company's lowest point.

His first move was to stem the slide in operating margins, launching a restructuring programme funded by the sale of seven non-core businesses. Having completed the disposals, the restructuring is on track and yesterday's announcement of a pre-tax profit of £26.9 million compared to a 1994 loss of £18.2 million confirmed that emergency surgery has worked.

Improved margins were the best news, and they look likely to improve further this year. A 5 per cent decrease in orders at the beginning of this year is mainly due to shrinkage of the disposals.

But the longer term question is whether, once APV has

completed its restructuring at the end of next year, it will have an expanding market to serve. Fierce competition in retailing is discouraging food companies from investing in equipment and the industry is already oversupplied. Meanwhile, competition rules make consolidation or mergers a difficult route.

In the next two years much will depend on consumers: will they want plain foods at low prices, or will they follow fads, meaning a demand for equipment from APV to produce fancy new foods and drinks? If you think the fads will prevail, then APV could be a buy but it will still be fighting for every order.

BET

FOR a company under threat of takeover, BET produced a remarkably sober profit forecast. Its estimate of a 28 per cent boost to pre-tax profits was only some 3 per cent ahead of some analysts' forecasts, not enough to do more

than nudge the share price ahead by 3p.

The reaction suggests that much of the growth trumpeted by BET yesterday was in the price. Bid targets generally lay their forecasts with a layer of judicious optimism, releasing some of the profit that might be withheld in a cautious provision. At yesterday's closing price of 203p, BET is valued on almost 19 times its forecast earnings, a reasonable premium for a collection of dull businesses. There is therefore little incentive for Rentokil to substantially increase its offer and BET investors can best hope for a sweetener.

The bigger question is whether BET investors should hold out for Rentokil shares or sell in the market. Rentokil will be hard pressed to bring BET's modest margins up to its own level and success in this bid could damage the extravagant rating of Rentokil shares.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA

Mar 22 2000 Mar 23 2000

Mar 24 2000 Mar 25 2000

Mar 26 2000 Mar 27 2000

Mar 28 2000 Mar 29 2000

Mar 30 2000 Mar 31 2000

Mar 32 2000 Mar 33 2000

Mar 34 2000 Mar 35 2000

Mar 36 2000 Mar 37 2000

Mar 38 2000 Mar 39 2000

Mar 40 2000 Mar 41 2000

Mar 42 2000 Mar 43 2000

Mar 44 2000 Mar 45 2000

Mar 46 2000 Mar 47 2000

Mar 48 2000 Mar 49 2000

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Mar 64 2000 Mar 65 2000

Mar 66 2000 Mar 67 2000

Mar 68 2000 Mar 69 2000

Mar 70 2000 Mar 71 2000

Mar 72 2000 Mar 73 2000

Mar 74 2000 Mar 75 2000

Mar 76 2000 Mar 77 2000

Mar 78 2000 Mar 79 2000

Mar 80 2000 Mar 81 2000

Mar 82 2000 Mar 83 2000

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Mar 94 2000 Mar 95 2000

Mar 96 2000 Mar 97 2000

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

FT-SE 100

Previous open interest: 63765

FT-SE 250

Previous open interest: 3405

Three Month Sterling

Previous open interest: 11319

Three Mth Eurodollar

Previous open interest: 0

Three Mth Euro DM

Previous open interest: 100755

Long Gilt

Previous open interest: 116548

Japanese Govt Bond

Previous open interest: 11858

German Gov Bd Bond

Previous open interest: 211755

Deutsche CD

Previous open interest: 21123

Euro Swiss Franc

Previous open interest: 5794

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Banking on luxury

GORDON Campbell Gray moved into Number One Aldwych this week, where he intends to turn the £12.5 million building, part of which was formerly a grand banking hall for Lloyds, into one of London's most prestigious hotels, and already he's planning his round-the-world tour to vet the competition.

Over three weeks, Mr Campbell Gray will stay in 20 of the world's finest hotels, including The Peninsula in Hong Kong and the Monteleone in Paris, where he'll scrutinise every detail from the softness of the hotel pillows to their shoe shine service. The Scottish managing director, who set up The Draycot in Cadogan Gardens, has even agreed to pack a camcorder, and include his findings in a fly-on-the-wall television documentary due out in September 1997, to coincide with the opening of the hotel.

Hard lines

LORD HOOSON, non-executive chairman of the Severn River Crossing, who retires as non-executive chairman of Laura Ashley on May 21, is planning to write a book on his varied career.

Lord Hooson, who first met Sir Bernard and Laura Ashley in 1963, when they only had two employees, hopes to put into print a collection of his "reflections" from his experiences as a businessman, barrister, politician and farmer. "I used to share a chamber with John Mortimer in Dr Johnson's building, so I've observed how hard he had to work," he says.



"Wessex Water, Severn Trent... it never rains but it pours"

THE morning market note that stockbrokers Pannure Gordon faxes to clients around the world was unusually to the point yesterday. Beside a pretty picture of a cow, it read: "The British people have been exposed to a new and unpleasant sickness: cash cow disease. Companies have recognised that the economy is mature and slow growing, so they are extracting cash, cutting investment to the minimum needed for maintenance and squeezing costs."

Back put out

WILL CARLING poured out his heart to doctors and nurses this week at the launch party of Pulse, the new healthcare appointments company. Resting his injured leg, the retiring England rugby captain complained of how he's bullied by his forwards. "They're always the ones to choose the videos at training camp," he said, then quoted Arnold Schwarzenegger from the film Predator: "I haven't got time to bleed."

THE UK's oldest and second-largest investment trust, Foreign & Colonial, has always found a novel way of comparing the value of £1,000 invested over various time periods. It introduced a new Mars Bar Index at its annual results presentation yesterday. In 1945, a Mars Bar cost the equivalent of 1.4p. Today it costs 20p. Meanwhile, £1,000 invested in F&C would now be worth just over £1m.

The role of head offices comes under scrutiny

What value do bosses add to big companies, asks Carl Mortished



Sir Michael Perry hopes that a new top management structure will deliver better leadership

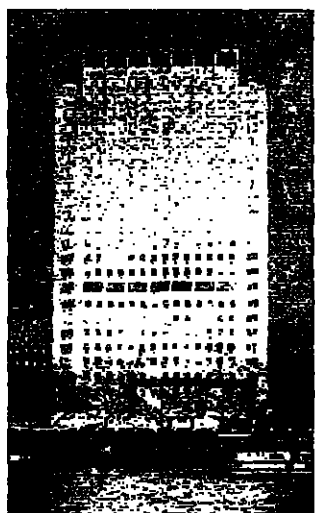
isations based on regions. Sir Michael Perry, Unilever's chairman, explained that under the previous structure, which mixed global responsibility for product strategy with bottom-line responsibility for a region, directors found themselves with conflicts of interest. "Since each of the members of the board were dealing with factional interests of their own, it was very difficult to get complete consensus for a common strategy," he said.

For local company bosses, that could be frustrating. Sir Michael remembers his own experience running Unilever in Thailand and receiving dozens of visits from regional directors, each with their own ideas and pet projects. "I would phone my director in London and ask him which of these twits will I listen to," he joked.

Shell's head office shake-up moves the strategic focus in the opposite direction: less emphasis on regions and more on a global strategy for the products. Shell has scrapped an entire man-

agement division, the regional co-ordinators who acted as the eyes and ears of the shareholders at local level. The new structure is based on four business groups: exploration, oil products, chemicals, and gas and coal, but Shell's new broom is aimed at addressing similar problems: streamlining communication and removing the conflicts that evolved from a complex management matrix developed over 30 years.

According to Peter Hadfield, Shell's human resources director, the structure which was designed to provide checks and balances to decision-making was almost too effective with too many decisions being passed up the corporate ladder. "We have tried to cut out bureaucracy. There are some things that must be decided locally, selling gasoline, for example. There are some things, such as refining, which are regional, and there are some things you decide globally: the Shell brand, for example." As a result, Shell has cut almost a third of its head



Shell's HQ has seen a shake-up

office staff, while Unilever has yet to decide what the job consequences will be. For companies of their size, such cost-cutting is almost irrelevant to the bottom line. What is important is the recognition that after decades of complacency, change has become necessary. In effect, someone has lifted the lid off Shell Centre and Unilever House, thrust in a wooden spoon and stirred vigorously.

Robin Buchanan, of Bain & Company, the management consultants, believes that companies should tackle the unpleasant question of what value, if any, is created by the corporate centre staff. "People are increasingly recognising that corporate centres can destroy value as well as create it. The question a company needs to ask is: are we at the corporate centre adding value to this business - yes or no? You can have very bureaucratic centres seeking to create synergies but the cost of going after them are greater than the benefits. In other cases, you can have a lot of local businesses with a local mindset when the company needs to fight globally."

Taken to its logical conclusion, the analysis may lead a corporate centre to chuck in the towel if it concluded that it was more of a cost than a resource. As Mr Buchanan puts it: "The answer to the question could be that our businesses would be better off belonging to someone else or, even if we are adding value, could someone else add even more value?" Mr Hadfield acknowledges

the point: "Their existence is justified because the businesses need them and because they are prepared to pay for them." In the event, neither Shell nor Unilever have put their assets up for sale, but at least one large international company, Hanson, came to a different conclusion and is in the process of splitting up.

To the outsider, the new committee structures at Unilever and Shell may look like musical chairs, but examined more closely, they are an attempt to address an intractable problem for multinationals: how to remain close to different customers in far flung locations while at the same time pushing their global brands. At the same time, their shareholders are tapping them on the shoulder demanding higher profits and dividends. Sir Michael put the new emphasis succinctly: "For example, the president of a mature business in America might feel that his way forward is to expand into areas that are less mature. But we will say - thank you, but your task is to generate value out of your existing business because we think it is probably better to invest this \$100 million of shareholders funds in China. That is a decision he cannot participate in."

The strategic focus on the Far East is slowly changing the ethnic make-up of the multinationals. Unilever is on its third local chairman in Indonesia, and Hindustan Lever, the Indian subsidiary, has more of its own staff working outside the country than foreign Unilever expatriates working within India. However, in both Shell and Unilever, at the heart of the corporate centre the faces are predominantly white; either English or Dutch.

That may change slowly but the search for growing markets raises a question as to how long the strategic decision-making of companies like Shell and Unilever will remain in slow-growth Europe. There is political resistance to creating regional corporate centres: an operating company in Thailand may find it easier to take instruction from London than Singapore. Technology transfer also remains a large part of the function of corporate centres, with local companies buying know-how from London, Rotterdam or The Hague.

However, companies like Shell and Unilever are not at the frontiers of high technology. Their skill is in delivering the same product of the same quality again and again around the world. The shareholders remain predominantly European or American. But if investors stay with them, it is because of the prospect of getting a stake in the high-growth emerging markets, not for the meagre profits earned from selling petrol in Surrey or detergent in Ohio.

City looks to new GEC chief for change

Ross Tieman on the legacy that awaits Lord Weinstock's successor

Three decades after its creation, the General Electric Company, Britain's biggest manufacturer, is at a crossroads. The breakdown of national markets has opened the door to global consolidation among rivals in the manufacture of power stations, railway equipment, and even washing machines. Low-margin competition from giant conglomerates in newly industrialised countries, such as Korea, is stepping up the pressure for restructuring.

A more tenuous in this world of slaving rot-wheels, in spite of its £10 billion of annual sales, GEC realises that it must move up the technology scale, and build production volumes to offset the cost.

Lord Prior, the chairman, acknowledged the challenge in his annual report last year. "The two elements critical to our success are greater access to the world's markets for our products and increased technological strength," he wrote.

The creator of GEC, Lord Weinstock, will surrender executive responsibility this autumn, at the age of 71, after 33 years at the helm. His successor as managing director will be George Simpson, the chief executive of Lucas Industries, a car parts maker one-third GEC's size. His task is to reshape GEC for a new century.

The renewal of GEC is already partly complete. In a visionary series of deals, beautifully accomplished, Weinstock joint-ventured several of GEC's businesses with strong partners at the end of the 1980s. The power systems and railway equipment operation was put into a 50/50 joint venture with Alcatel of France to create GEC-Alsthom, which is now a £7 billion a year business.

In telephone equipment, GEC took on board Siemens of Germany as junior partner (and technology provider) in a 60/40 joint venture, GPT. GEC's Hotpoint fridges, Creda cookers and Cannon gas fires were put into a 50/50 venture with those of its American namesake, General Electric. Furthermore, Weinstock engineered a half-share in

Europe's biggest satellite builder by merging GEC's space interests with those of Matra of France and mopping up the British Aerospace space business to create Matra-Maroni Space.

All of these deals helped GEC to achieve critical mass in fast-consolidating markets, at minimal cost. Weinstock has long preferred to buy technology and, indeed, capacity, through acquisitions, rather than risk the company's money. His management style has been overwhelmingly conservative and risk-averse, focusing on tight financial controls.

That is how GEC has built up a £2.94 billion cash pile, and why pre-tax profits have grown by only £197 million, to £907 million, in the past decade. For Weinstock, read "yield stock". According to insiders, Mr Simpson will be welcomed with open arms.

In a review of Mr Simpson's options at GEC, Andrew Bryant, of County Nat-West, argues that the company is in for a radical overhaul. Yes, Mr Simpson will open up the management culture and invest in technology and capacity.

The first target will be strategic partnerships. Expected renewed efforts to merge GEC-Marconi, the £5 billion a year defence business, with the soon-to-be privatised Thomson CSF of France, in a three-way link involving Matra, GEC's existing partner in the space industry.

Simpson could also do a deal with Dick Evans, the British Aerospace chief executive, for whom he used to work as deputy, to bring in BAE's missile interests. A flotation of GEC-Alsthom is a possibility, together with new partnerships for that business, and for GPT.

Disposals are probable. The favourites for disposal are businesses that lack critical mass and are seen as peripheral, such as GDA, in white goods, Videoprint, in printing, and Express, the life company, together with some of the colonial legacy operations.

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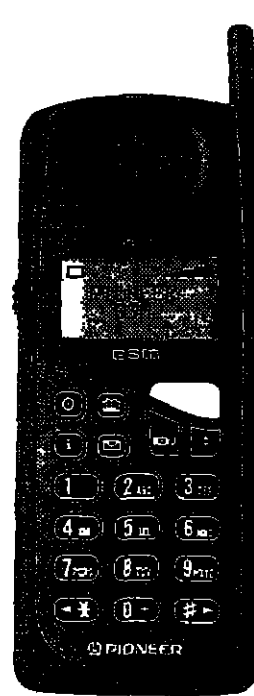
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Riches were always the attraction in such a risky business

From Mr John Perry
Sir, Names at Lloyd's are faced with the decision to accept or refuse the Equitas scheme. The two letters you published from Mr R. F. May and Mr J. D. Burrows reflect some of the attitudes surrounding Lloyd's.

As a young qualified solicitor with a firm representing Lloyd's, it was one of my tasks to sit in on the interviews with prospective names at Lloyd's. In 1960 it was the standard practice to advise them that at law they would become liable to their last penny. That having been said, it was added that should a syndicate run into difficulties, it was to be expected that Lloyd's would launch a lifeboat service to come to the rescue.

I well remember the case of one individual who refused to accept financial help because he said that he had entered into the insurance market in the knowledge that he would be personally liable to his last penny. Perhaps a monument should be erected to his honourable example.

I noted the jibe against lawyers "who may not be bent

but are certainly bent on getting richer". "Getting richer" was the hope which enticed many names into the insurance market. It raised the prospect of a second income without any further work involved. At one time, when there was a distinction between earned and unearned income, the money was described as earned income: a misnomer. It would appear that the large exposure to the US asbestos risks has been responsible for the mind-boggling losses.

I fear Mr Burrows is being too narrow in his focus on the short passage from the decision in the Keene Corporation case. Lloyd's, it was said, would take on any risk. Of course, had Keene been aware of the existence of the harmful propensities of asbestos without disclosing the same then the policies could have been rendered void on the grounds of non-disclosure of material facts.

Insurance is a risky business. My efforts for Lloyd's were rewarded by an invitation to dine at the Captain's table. When the senior partner

heard of my acceptance, I was sacked. I never did enjoy that meal. Who knows, had I become a wealthy City lawyer, I too may have become a name at Lloyd's.

This cannot be justice

From Mr Harry Swaddle
Sir, A ballot will be taken in the next few months to accept or reject the Lloyd's 1996 settlement. Only 12,000 of the 34,000 names remain, after resignation for personal reasons by some, plus the "can't pay" and "won't pay". As we will all have a vote, those who have left will no doubt vote to accept and the minority will be left to foot the bill.

In some cases the "won't pay" names will be voting to make others pay their losses. This cannot be justice.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY SWADDLE,
5 Beverley Gardens,
Colliercoats,
Tyne and Wear.

Disasters not Lloyd's fault

From G. B. Potts
Sir, So many of the letters you publish, mostly from embittered names, seem to ignore the fact that, quite apart from asbestos and pollution, there were, in the three years 1988, 1989 and 1990, no less than 11 major disasters. The claims arising from these were bound to cause underwriting losses which were not the fault of Lloyd's, nor were they due to malpractice or incompetence.

The fact that these inevitable losses fell heavily on certain syndicates may well have been due to bad judgement and, in some cases, incompetence, but for names to act now as though all the blame lies with Lloyd's is to ignore the facts.

I agree that the offer will have to be improved to gain acceptance but it is, in my view, the only realistic solution to the problem.

Yours faithfully,
G. B. POTTS,
Cloth House,
Nethergate Street,
Clare, Sudbury,
Suffolk.

Invesco planning to buy

INVECO, the international fund management group, is to use its £70 million cash pile to make acquisitions to boost funds under management and expand its businesses in northern Europe, the US and the Asian markets (Robert Miller writes).

Norman Riddell, chief executive of Invesco, which yesterday unveiled a 28 per cent increase in annual profits to top £50 million up to December 31, said that the group started off the New Year in acquisitive style by purchasing Aetna Investment Management in Hong Kong for £6 million spread over three years. Global funds under management rose to £53.8 billion against £41.7 billion last time.

Mr Riddell said: "We are always willing to consider a purchase, but it must be the right business at the right price." Earnings per share rose by 17 per cent to 13.7p, while the final dividend of 4p contributed to a total payout for the year of 5.75p, compared with 4.75p in 1994.

National Express ready to venture overseas as profits speed to £41m

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

NATIONAL EXPRESS, the transport company which now operates coaches, buses and airports, says it is considering "dozens of opportunities" to invest in, or acquire, new companies in the UK, Europe and Far East. Adam Mills, deputy chief executive, said National Express was also interested in setting up joint ventures abroad.

He expects to hear "within three weeks" whether NE has been successful in its bid to operate privatised rail services on either the InterCity East Coast Mainline, Midland Mainline, Network South Central or Gatwick Express routes.

He said: "We are hopeful that we will get something." Mr Mills was less optimistic about NE's bid for Birmingham Airport. He said: "We are probably unlikely to be allowed to take a stake, but are still interested in UK airports." National Express already owns both East Midlands and Bournemouth airports.

Yesterday NE reported a



Adam Mills, Phil White, West Midlands Travel chief executive, Ray McEnhill, and Colin Child, NE finance director

near-threefold increase in pre-tax profits in 1995 to £41.5 million from £15.2 million. Operating profit rose to £44 million from £16.3 million, with a £24.7 million contribu-

tion from West Midlands Travel (WMT), acquired in April 1995.

Cost-cutting measures to reduce debt at WMT had resulted in the loss of 120 jobs and

more were likely, Mr Mills said. Deregulation of buses meant the market was now "very tough", and NE faced competitive pressures in all its operating areas.

The company has spent several thousand pounds fitting seat belts to all new coaches and by 1997 all 550 will have belts.

National Express has a 17

per cent stake in London & Continental, the consortium which won the contract to build and operate the £3 billion Channel Tunnel rail link.

Meanwhile, operating profit on the coach division last year was flat, at £9.69 million (£9.86 million), although the 1994 figures had been boosted by increased passengers during the rail strike.

Passenger numbers at East Midlands Airport rose 17 per cent to 1.9 million (1.6 million).

Earnings per share were up 11 per cent to 27.9p (25.2p). Gearing at the year end was 36 per cent (6 per cent), and the increase reflects the debt within West Midlands Travel when it was acquired.

NE is now looking for a successor to outgoing chief executive Ray McEnhill, who wants to step down because of ill health. Mr Mills said the company was "still searching and expects to make an announcement next month".

The total dividend has been increased by 15 per cent to 10p net, compared with 8.7p last year. The shares rose 4p to 481p.

Dividend at F&C is raised again

By ROBERT MILLER

FOREIGN & Colonial, Britain's oldest investment trust, has rewarded its shareholders with a 25th consecutive annual dividend increase. F&C, which has assets of £1.3 billion and has been managed by Michael Hart since 1969, lifted the final payout by a higher than forecast 10 per cent to 2.1p.

F&C's performance was further boosted by the trust's managers borrowing £134 million to gain additional exposure to the yen and the US and UK bond markets. The F&C investment view was that the yen would gain in strength and for UK and US bond prices to rise. Initially, the bet back-fired, but finally came good in 1995, enabling Mr Hart to pay back the loan and bank a profit further enhanced by currency gains and interest rate differentials.

F&C has increased the number of predominantly private shareholders to 108,000 from 95,000 previously and has attracted 2,400 investors to its low-cost personal pension plan. Among the top ten investments in its portfolio is a £52 million stake in Robert Fleming, the private merchant bank.

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CHANGING TIMES

Geest pegs payout despite red ink

By SARAH BAGNALL

SHARPLY lower banana prices and a string of one-off costs pushed Geest, the UK food company, into the red in the year to December 30.

The group, which sold its banana business at the start of the year for £147.1 million, yesterday revealed a slump in pre-tax profits of £12.8 million to a loss of £600,000. Sales fell from £675.7 million to £659.8 million.

Michael Dowdall, chairman, said: "The sale of the banana business marks the beginning of a new stage in the development of Geest."

"Today, Geest is clearly focused on fresh convenience foods — an area of rapid growth and increasing consumer penetration." The sale provides Geest with the financial muscle to expand in this

fast-growing market. The decline in fortunes reflects £10.6 million of net exceptional costs and a decline in underlying profits from £12.3 million to £10 million.

The banana business, which will not feature in future results, saw operating profits plunge 23 per cent to £8.8 million because of the imposition of an export tax by Colombia and lower banana prices.

In contrast, the group's food preparation businesses lifted operating profits 33 per cent to £10 million, while the fresh convenience foods businesses made an operating profit of £9.4 million.

The final dividend, due July 1, of 4.4p maintains the total for the year at 8.1p. The shares rose 4p to 224p.

Tenneco set for spin-offs

TENNECO, the US conglomerate, is taking its break-up plan one stage further with two large spin-offs this year (Richard Thomson writes). The first is its Newport News Shipbuilding operation, which will be offered to shareholders late in 1996. It also expects to put the finishing touches to a plan to separate its large Tenneco energy

business from its industrial operations by the middle of this year.

The Newport News operation in Vermont supplied \$1.7 billion last year, or 15 per cent of Tenneco's revenues. The energy business, which includes a natural gas pipeline, contributed \$1.9 billion, or about 20 per cent of revenues. The pipeline supplies about one sixth of US natural gas.

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Hepworth pays the same after flat profits

By MARTIN BARROW

HEPWORTH, the building products, heating and minerals group, is maintaining its 1995 dividend after returning annual pre-tax profits little changed at £74.5 million, against £75.5 million previously.

The company warned shareholders that profits for the first half of the current year will be affected by difficult trading conditions in construction markets across Europe, compounded by adverse weather.

Industrial, heating and home products activities continued to perform at reasonable levels in highly competitive markets, Hepworth said. John Carter, chief executive, said that it was hoped that lower interest rates in western Europe would provide the backdrop for a progressive rise in activity later in the year.

After a promising start, 1995 had proved to be a difficult year in its key construction, heating and home products markets in Britain and on the Continent, the company said. However, an improved result from its refractory and minerals activities led to an overall performance in line with 1994.

Operating profits slipped to £73.6 million, from £76.7 million, a decline of 4 per cent, in

spite of a 10 per cent rise in turnover, to £765.9 million, from £695.9 million.

Profits in the building products division fell to £16.1 million, from £19.8 million, while the contribution from home products declined to £9 million, from £12.8 million. Saunders Duval, the boilers subsidiary, held profits almost unchanged at £29 million, against £29.4 million. Buoyant markets lifted the refractories division, whose profits rose to £7.6 million, from £4.3 million, and the minerals and chemicals division, which earned £11.9 million, up from £10.4 million.

There was a net cash outflow of £27.4 million, reflecting increased capital expenditure and acquisitions, which lifted gearing to 22.3 per cent, from 8.4 per cent. Interest cover remained high, at 25 times.

Hepworth is to seek shareholder approval to acquire up to 10 per cent of its ordinary shares, although the company emphasised that it had no intention of buying the shares at the current time. The shares fell 3p, to 290p, yesterday.

The final dividend is unchanged, at 9.35p a share, due on July 12, which maintains the total at 14.85p. Earnings per share were 20.8p, down from 21.6p.

Rights issue at Abbott Mead Vickers

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

A 1-FOR-8 rights issues was launched yesterday at Abbott Mead Vickers, the advertising group, to cover the cost of recent acquisitions.

The announcement was made after the company unveiled a 27 per cent rise in full-year profits to £10.4 million. David Abbott, chairman, was also bullish about prospects for this year, saying the company had made a strong start. Abbott Mead has won £50 million new business to date this year, including ICI Dulux and Prudential.

The company also recently bought Fishburn Hedges Boys Williams, the PR company.

Turnover increased by 18 per cent to £287 million. The total dividend was increased by 22 per cent to 9p, with a final dividend of 6.25p payable on June 7.

Last year, Abbott Mead gained £115 million in new business, with new clients including Timberland, Pizza Hut and Texas, the DIY chain. The company also enjoyed a large rise in cross-referrals between its marketing and advertising businesses, ending the year with 36 clients using two or more group companies. Group margins increased from 15.6 per cent to 16 per cent, with margins in the advertising division increasing from 14.1 to 14.6 per cent.

The company said that BBDO Worldwide, one of its main shareholders, would not be subscribing to the rights issue but had recently increased its holding in Abbott Mead to 29.6 per cent. BBDO said it would maintain a long-term commitment to its holding in Abbott Mead.

Maunder encouraged by housing market

John Maunder Group, the housebuilder operating in northwest and southern England, said that although the housing market remains fragile, sales this year are encouraging, with reservations on target and demand aided by cuts in interest rates and tax.

In the half to December 31, group pre-tax profits fell to £2.5 million, from £3.6 million. The interim dividend remains 2.45p, due on April 26.

Flare buys

Flare Group, the ceramics company, formerly Hewitt Group, is paying £6 million for Briscoe, a kiln maker, and £2.6 million for CMS Colours, supplier of transfers for pottery. Flare made a 1995 pre-tax profit of £1.3 million (1994 loss of £6.3 million). Earnings were 12.7p a share (117.9p loss). There is again no dividend.

Blow to Quality

Pre-tax profits of Quality Software Products fell to £502,697 last year, from £2.5 million, in spite of a 30 per cent rise in turnover, to £21.4 million. A 1.5p final dividend, due on July 17, makes 3p, down from 4.5p.

Gleeson ahead

MJ Gleeson Group, the housebuilding and property company, is lifting its interim dividend to 3.75p, from 3.55p, after a rise in pre-tax profits to £3.48 million (£3.24 million) in the half year to December 31.

Try slips

Try Group, the contractor and housebuilder, made a 1995 pre-tax loss of £4.4 million (1994 profits of £620,000). There is no dividend (fp).



James Frost predicted more volume in fewer hands, leading to higher prices at the pumps. He said Frost Group would aim to maximise its margins

Frost edges ahead in tough market

PROFITS at Frost Group, the independent petrol station chain operator, were little changed in 1995, reflecting the difficult trading conditions in a fiercely competitive market (Martin Barrow writes).

Pre-tax profits rose to £11.1 million in 1995 from £10.9 million in 1994, in spite of a sharp rise in turnover to £451.5 million from £229.4 million.

There was a five-month contribution from Burmah Castrol's petrol and wholesale business acquired in July for £83 million. Frost also operates the SAVE chain.

There is a final dividend of 3.8p a share, which lifts the total to 7p from 5.6p. Headline earnings fell to 10.2p a share from 11p, although they rose to 13.9p after adjustment for last year's

rights issue to fund the Burmah purchase.

James Frost, chairman, said the results represented "a highly satisfactory outcome for a difficult year in the UK petroleum market".

Mr Frost gave warning that 1996 was going to be tough. Restructuring within the industry would leave BP, Esso and Shell with up to 55 per cent of

the retail market, while the private dealer market would fall in volume terms. He said: "The end result will be more volume concentrated in fewer hands and that means higher pump prices."

The company said it sought to maximise its total gross margin, even if this meant maintaining margin per litre and sacrificing volume.

Laing down but sees pick-up

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

JOHN LAING, the construction company, yesterday reported a 15 per cent fall in full-year profits to £20.8 million but was confident the UK construction market was beginning to pick up.

Martin Laing, the chairman, said: "The UK housing market has begun to recover, particularly in the South East, and in recent weeks we have seen a growth in sales. However, it is too early to assess the strength of the recovery."

Mr Laing believes a full recovery and an improvement in the risk/reward ratio of the construction industry in the medium term would enable the group to strengthen its performance.

Turnover increased 3 per cent to £1.2 billion. The construction division made a £2.3 million loss (£2 million profit), after taking an £11.1 million restructuring charge. But the housing division showed a 25 per cent profit improvement at £11.9 million. UK housing sales fell from 2,114 to 1,675 with a slight improvement in the US at 721 units. Total dividend was 9p unchanged, with a final 6p, payable on July 5.

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• Greggs The Baker Plc (Manchester) • Ashworth Hospital, Centre for Aggression Management • British Aerospace Defence Limited, Military Aircraft Division • HM Customs and Excise, North West Collection • The Scottish Police College and The Scottish Police Service • Bank Of Scotland • Denplan Limited • Castrol (UK) Limited • Judith Billington • British Steel Tioxide • British Steel Strip Products Integrated Works, Llanwern • KIP Applied Bar Code Technology • Peritas Limited • Caroline Dunn • Integrated Graduate Development Scheme (The Queens' University of Belfast and The University of Ulster) • Aramark PLC • Linkage Specialist Residential Colleges • Latymer Training • Shadow Trust Career Development • Bruce Pittingale • Access Computer Centre, Swindon College • Orgill Junior School • West Fife Enterprise Limited • Robert Atken • The Insolvency Service and Psychological Services • Royal Mail North Wales, North West and Manchester Open Learning • Minds Eye and G & J Partnership • Hull City Services, Building Services Division and Hull College, Faculty of Building and Civil Engineering • Anne Sudell • School of the Built Environment, Coventry University and Gulliford • Strathclyde Region Education Department/Strathclyde Police/Strathclyde Region Reporter's Department to the Children's Panel/Strathclyde Region Social Work Department • Les Hornby • Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department and James Watt College of Further and Higher Education • Dunchurch, The GEC Management College • Maksouda Wahid • Croydon Continuing Education and Training Service and London Borough of Croydon, Social Services Department • The Banks Group of Companies

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THYSSEN AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT

Publication pursuant to Arts. 25 (2) and 41 (3) of the German Securities Trade Act ("WpHG")

In accordance with Art. 21 (1) WpHG, Thyssen Beteiligungsverwaltung GmbH, Düsseldorf, Germany, informed us that, after selling part of its stake in our company's voting capital, its shareholding has decreased to 10.0001 percent, which is below the threshold of 25 percent.

Pursuant to Arts. 21 (1) and 22 (1) no. 2 WpHG, Thyssen Vermögensverwaltung GmbH, Düsseldorf, Germany, notified us that it no longer holds the majority of the voting rights in Thyssen Beteiligungsverwaltung GmbH, Düsseldorf, Germany.

Under the terms of Art. 41 (2) WpHG, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Cologne, Germany, informed us that it has held 8.58 percent of our company's voting stock as of January 1, 1995.

Duisburg, Germany, March 22, 1996

The Executive Board

THE TIMES FRIDAY MARCH 22 1996

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Law Report March 22 1996 House of Lords

Legal professional privilege lost in investigative child care proceedings.

In re L (a Minor) (Police Investigation: Privilege)

Before Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Mustill, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead and Lord Steyn (speeches March 21)

Since proceedings under the Part IV of the Children Act 1989 were investigative and non-adversarial in nature and placed the welfare of the child as the primary consideration, an expert report obtained by a party to care proceedings not protected by legal professional privilege.

The House of Lords held by a majority, Lord Mustill and Lord Nicholls dissenting, in dismissing an appeal by the mother of L, a minor, from the Court of Appeal (Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Swinton and Lord Justice Morritt) (The Times April 25, 1995) which had upheld the order of Mrs Justice Brackwell that a medical report concerning L, commissioned by the mother in the course of interim care proceedings in respect of L and her brother, be disclosed to the Greater Manchester Police Authority.

Miss Lindsey Kushner, QC and Miss Lesley A. Newton for the mother; Mr David M. Harris, QC and Mr Anthony Hayden for the council; Mr David M. Harris, QC and Miss Yvonne Coppel for the police authority; Mr Ernest Ryder for the guardian ad litem.

LORD JAUNCEY said that in 1993 L, a child of two drug addicts, became seriously ill after ingesting a quantity of methadone. The mother's explanation was that the child's taking of the substance was accidental. Shortly thereafter the council obtained interim care or-

ders in respect of L and her brother.

On the application of both parents, a district judge made the following order: "The parents shall have leave to disclose to a medical expert the court papers for the purpose of a report regarding the frequency of the consumption of methadone by L. The identity of such expert is to be disclosed to all parties. The report is to be filed..."

The effect of the order was that the report when filed would be available for inspection and copying by any party to the proceedings and the guardian ad litem.

The mother's solicitors duly instructed a consultant chemical pathologist. His report concluded that there was no evidence for habituation to methadone but cast serious doubts on the mother's account of accidental ingestion.

Thereafter the police, while attending a case conference, came to hear of the report and made application to be provided with a copy for the purpose of investigating criminal offences. The judge held that she had jurisdiction to order disclosure to non-parties and that her discretion should be exercised in favour of disclosure.

The mother appealed and while accepting that in general the court had jurisdiction to order disclosure to non-parties she maintained that it had no jurisdiction to order disclosure of the report to the police authority because (i) it was protected by legal professional privilege, and (ii) its disclosure would infringe her privilege against self-incrimination.

She further argued that the judge had exercised her discretion wrongly.

Legal professional privilege
The order of the district judge

was in the form approved in *Oxfordshire County Council v M* ([1994] Fam 151).

Sir Stephen Brown, President, there said at para 62: "Children's cases are to be regarded as being in a special category. In these circumstances, the court has power to override legal professional privilege in relation to experts' reports when it gives leave to parties to obtain them."

In *R v Derby Magistrates' Court, Ex parte B* ([1995] 3 WLR 681, 697) Lord Taylor of Gossforth, Lord Chief Justice, had stated that "an exception must be made to the absolute nature of legal professional privilege once established."

However, it was clear from his reasoning and that of the other members of the committee that the reference to legal professional privilege had been in the context of the relationship between solicitor and client.

Miss Kushner had maintained that the absolute nature of the privilege attaching to the solicitor-client relationship extended equally to all other forms of legal professional privilege. His Lordship rejected that contention.

There was, as Mr Harris pointed out, a clear distinction between the privilege attaching to communications between solicitor and client and that attaching to reports by third parties prepared on the instructions of a client for the purposes of litigation.

In the former case the privilege attached to all communications whether related to litigation or not. In the latter case it attached only to documents or other written communications prepared with a view to litigation.

Further, whereas a solicitor

could not without his client's consent be compelled to express an opinion on the factual or legal merits of the case, a third party who had provided a report to a client could be subpoenaed to give evidence by the other side and could not decline to answer questions as to his factual findings and opinion thereon.

Since care proceedings under Part IV of the 1989 Children were non-adversarial in their nature, whereas litigation privilege was essentially a creature of adversarial proceedings, it followed that the matter was large for the House to determine what if any role it had to play in care proceedings.

His Lordship concluded that care proceedings, which were primarily non-adversarial and investigative, were so far removed from normal actions that litigation privilege had no place in relation to reports obtained by a party thereto which could not have been prepared without the leave of the court to disclose documents already filed or to examine the child.

If litigation privilege were to apply to the report in the present case it could have the effect of subordinating the welfare of the child to the interests of the mother in preserving its confidentiality.

The *Oxfordshire* case had been argued on the assumption that the privilege existed but could be overridden. The better view was that litigation privilege never arose in the first place. It was excluded by necessary implication from the terms and overall purpose of the Act. That did not, of course, affect privilege arising between solicitor and client.

Privilege against self-incrimination

Where a court was asked to make an order for disclosure, compliance with which was likely to involve the danger of self-incrimination by the defendant, an order producing such a result should not be made. This, however, was not such a case. When the mother applied for the order the district judge had no reason to suppose that the report which was sought might incriminate the person seeking it.

It was only when the report became available that its possible incriminating effect became known and it was at that stage when the mother was first in a position to advance her claim to privilege by seeking a variation of that part of the order which required the report to be filed.

However, since the mother had voluntarily initiated the process, did not appeal the order when it was made and observed it, notwithstanding that it was the unfavourable nature of the report had by then become apparent, she had to be taken to have waived any claim which she may have had to privilege against self-incrimination consequent upon the order of the district judge.

His Lordship emphasised that although he had assumed that the mother might have had a claim to privilege in respect of the report, he had not found it necessary to decide whether or not she would have had one but for her waiver.

Any such claim would on any view have been of limited value, since the maker of the report, if subpoenaed as a witness, would have been bound to answer questions as to the opinion which he

had formed and the mother would have been bound to answer questions as to the opinion expressed in the report: see section 98(1) of the 1989 Act.

Exercise of discretion

The judge's exercise of her discretion had not been plainly wrong. She had taken the view, which was entirely justified, that the best interests of L would be served by disclosure. It could not possibly be said that in reaching such a decision she had acted in error.

In such proceedings it would be most unsatisfactory if the court, having information that the mother might have committed a serious offence against the children whose welfare it was seeking to protect, should be disabled from disclosing such information to the appropriate investigating authority.

LORD LLOYD and Lord Steyn agreed with Lord Jauncey.

LORD NICHOLLS, dissenting, said that legal professional privilege was deeply embedded in English law. That was confirmed recently by the House in *The Derby* case. The privilege against non-disclosure prevailed even where the privileged material might assist the defence of a person charged with murder.

Clear words or a compelling context were needed before Parliament could be taken to have intended that the privilege should be ousted in favour of another interest. The Children Act contained neither.

The crucial question was not whether and to what extent the proceedings were inquisitorial rather than adversarial. The question to be addressed was what was required if the proceedings were to

be conducted fairly. Family proceedings were court proceedings. The court had to make decisions affecting, often profoundly, the whole future of a child and his or her family.

Whenever necessary, the court made findings on disputes of fact. It went without saying that the parties to such proceedings were entitled to have a fair hearing.

A fair hearing included the right to present one's case and to call evidence. Under English law an established ingredient of that right was legal professional privilege.

It had to be doubtful whether a parent who was denied the opportunity to obtain legal advice in confidence was accorded the fair hearing to which he was entitled under article 6(1), read in conjunction with article 8, of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953) (Cmd 8949).

Parents and other parties should be entitled to such a fair hearing notwithstanding the special role of judges in family proceedings. If that was not to be, Parliament should say so expressly. The paramountcy principle had to be permitted to become a loose cannon, destroying all around it.

In the course of the submissions it had been suggested that the Children Act had impliedly abrogated litigation privilege, while leaving legal advice privilege untouched. His Lordship could not accept that. The two sub-headings were integral parts of a single privilege.

In the context of court proceedings, the purpose of legal advice privilege would be frustrated if the legal adviser could not approach potential witnesses in confidence before advising the client. That

was as much true in family proceedings as in any other.

The privilege did not thwart the objective of family proceedings, the application of the paramountcy principle. Parties were not able to suppress the evidence of an available expert, since his views could always be made available within the existing legal framework. In the time-honoured aphorism, there was no property in a witness.

He could not be required to disclose the contents of communications between himself and the first party's legal adviser. But his evidence on the issue before the court, which was all that was material, could be compelled.

There was an argument that since the expert could be compelled to give evidence, imposing a disclosure condition was doing no more than achieving, by a convenient and expeditious route, a result the court could in any event achieve production of the expert's evidence on an issue the only effect of a disclosure condition, his Lordship would agree.

In practice, however, a disclosure condition would be bound to have an inhibiting effect on communications between the solicitor and the expert and would make significant inroads into the freedom and frankness of confidential communication which the privilege existed to secure. For that reason a disclosure condition went beyond the conventional ordering of evidence.

LORD MUSTILL agreed with Lord Nicholls.

Solicitors: Green & Co, Manchester; Mrs Susan Orrell, Manchester; Mr Patrick Mulvenna, Salford; Clifford, Alderley Edge.

Tribunals should find real cause of dismissal

Speciality Care plc v Pachela and Another

Before Judge Clark, Mr N. D. Willis and Mr T. C. Thomas (Judgment March 8)

Where there was a complaint of dismissal by reason of trade union membership it was for the industrial tribunal to find as a fact whether or not the reason or principal reason for dismissal related to the applicant's trade union membership within the meaning of section 152(1)(a) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, not only by reference to whether the employee had simply joined a union but also by reference to whether the introduction of union representation into the employment relationship had led the employer to dismiss the employee.

Tribunals should answer that question robustly, based on their findings as to what really caused the dismissal in the mind of the employer.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal so held when allowing an appeal from a decision of a Leeds industrial tribunal in August 1994, that the applicants, Helen Pachela and Karen Kellel, had been unfairly dismissed by their employers, Speciality Care plc.

The employers had appealed on the grounds, inter alia, that the tribunal's reasoning was inadequate and that the tribunal had misdirected itself as to the meaning of trade union membership for the purposes of section 152(1)(a) in the light of a subsequent decision of the House of Lords in the

conjoined appeals of *Associated Newspapers Ltd v Wilson*; *Associated British Ports v Palmer* ([1995] ICR 406).

Section 152 provides that "the dismissal of an employee shall be regarded as unfair if the reason for it, or more than one, is that the employee—(a) was, or proposed to become, a member of an independent trade union..."

Mr William Birles for the employers; Mr Paul Rose for the applicants.

JUDGE CLARK, delivering the judgment of the tribunal, said that at the time of their dismissals in February 1994 neither applicant had completed two years' employment. Their complaints were based on section 154 of the 1992 Act which excluded the two-year qualifying period provisions for a complaint of unfair dismissal where the reason related to trade union membership or activities.

The employers had resolved to alter the shift pattern of the applicants' employment as nursing home carers after their acquisition of the business following a transfer of ownership. The applicants were advised to join their union which they did. They refused to work the new shifts and were subsequently dismissed.

The employers had argued that although their refusal to work the new shifts might have been one factor behind the decision to dismiss the applicants, the principal reason was that they had joined the union and had sought to use the union as the means of

making their protest. It concluded that the principal reason for their dismissal was their joining the union and the dismissals were automatically unfair by reason of section 152.

The ground would be allowed on appeal that the tribunal had failed to set out its reasoning sufficiently. There was no clear exposition of the findings of primary fact which led the tribunal to draw the inference that the principal reason for dismissal was union membership.

The case would be remitted to another industrial tribunal and it was necessary for the appeal tribunal to consider the application of section 152 of the 1992 Act for that tribunal to apply.

The industrial tribunal had decided the present case after the Court of Appeal's decision in *Palmer*, but before that of the House of Lords. In the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Dillon had cited a passage from the judgment of Mr Justice Knox in *Discount Tobacco and Confectionery Ltd v Armitage* ([1995] ICR 433) and stated that that decision meant that it was open to an industrial tribunal to hold that an employee had been dismissed for being a member of a union if he had been dismissed for invoking the assistance of the union in relation to his employment. That represented the law to be applied by industrial tribunals unless it had been overruled by the House of Lords.

The House of Lords had expressed a divergence of views on the meaning of trade union membership but it was an issue which it was not necessary for them to decide and their remarks were obiter. It seemed that *Armitage* was correct on its facts.

It would be for an industrial tribunal to find as a fact whether or not the reason or principal reason for dismissal related to the applicant's trade union membership not only by reference to whether he had simply joined a union, but also by reference to whether the introduction of union representation into the employment relationship had led the employer to dismiss the employee. Tribunals should answer that question robustly, based on their findings as to what had really caused the dismissal.

Solicitors: Eaton & Co, Bradford; Mr J. O'Hara, Wimbledon.

Solicitor must not benefit after contributing to other's mistake

Ernst & Young (a Firm) v Butte Mining plc

Before Mr Justice Robert Walker (Judgment March 6)

A solicitor must scrupulously refrain from taking advantage of another's obvious mistake, especially in the most hostile litigation. That duty was intensified where he had been a major contributing cause of the mistake.

Mr Justice Robert Walker so held in the Chancery Division in holding that service of a notice of discontinuance by Barlow Lyde & Gilbert of an action in which their clients, Ernst & Young, claimed some £315,000 from Butte Mining plc, the defendant, which, if valid, would have had the effect of preventing Butte from pursuing its claim against Ernst & Young, be set aside as an abuse of the process of the court.

Mr Jonathan Hirst, QC and Mr Neil Calver for Ernst & Young; Mr Alan Boyle, QC and Mr Douglas Close for Butte.

MR JUSTICE ROBERT WALKER said that Ernst & Young had entered judgment in their action, in default of defence, on March 7, 1995. That same day Butte had applied to set that aside, supported by affidavits from its then solicitor to the effect that the omission to serve a defence had been inadvertent.

On April 7 there was exhibited to an affidavit sworn on Butte's behalf a draft counterclaim for at least £1.5 million. A counter-affidavit on behalf of Ernst & Young called that counterclaim "wholly spurious and belatedly raised in a transparently dishonest attempt to have a simple judgment... set aside" illustrating that that was litigation of the utmost vigour.

A further crucial affidavit on Butte's behalf, to which was exhibited a letter of defence and counterclaim, claimed damages of around £100 million.

The next material events occurred at the end of January 1996, when discussions led to the sealing by the court on January 31 of a consent order setting aside the default judgment and continuing that Butte "be at liberty unconditionally... to serve on [Ernst & Young] its defence and counterclaim".

Barlow Lyde & Gilbert, having taken care to serve the order, got it soon after midday on

February 1 and at 1420h served it, together with Ernst & Young's now-disputed notice of discontinuance, on Butte's solicitors, Frere Cholmeley Bischoff, At 1545h Frere Cholmeley Bischoff purportedly served Butte's defence and counterclaim on Barlow Lyde & Gilbert.

A plaintiff's right to discontinue, without leave and at any time not later than 14 days after service of the defence, was subject to the overriding rule that he could not do so if it was an abuse of process: *Castanho v Brown & Root* ([1981] AC 557, 571).

Since the damages sought in the draft counterclaim were so very much larger than the sum awarded in the default judgment it was understandable that Ernst & Young should conclude that they would willingly relinquish the latter in order to scotch the former, because a fresh action by Butte, to recover those damages, would be statute-barred.

Conversely, Butte might conclude that Ernst & Young should, if possible, be stopped from discontinuing their action unless and until Butte's counterclaim had been served; once made, it would survive discontinuance, under Order 15, rule 2(3) of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

It was clear from the evidence of both the litigation partners concerned, Miss Caroline Bassett and Frere Cholmeley Bischoff and Miss Clare Canning at Barlow Lyde & Gilbert, that each was well aware of the implications of the position; but neither was sure that the other was equally aware of them.

Three issues had been canvassed: 1 Had Butte, at the time of service of the notice of discontinuance, already made a counterclaim so as to take advantage of rule 2(3)?

His Lordship analysed nine leading authorities on the topic, drawing the conclusion that the balance favoured the stricter view taken by Mr Justice Robert Goff in *Imper Transport v Thames Holdings* ([1981] 1 WLR 1547) so that Butte failed to show that it had.

2 Had there been an agreement between the solicitors that Ernst &

Young would not serve any notice of discontinuance before expiry of Butte's time for serving its defence and counterclaim?

His Lordship analysed the evidence and after finding that Miss Bassett must have made a deliberate decision not to mention discontinuance in speaking to Miss Canning, in case she put into her mind a thought that was not there, was not satisfied that either solicitor intended to conclude any larger agreement than that embodied in the agreed court order and concluded that, construed naturally, without reference to the actual intentions of either, the order did not exclude Ernst & Young's right to serve such notice.

3 Did such service by Barlow Lyde & Gilbert amount to an abuse of process?

In *Fraser Brothers v A. P. Moller* ([1994] 1 Lloyd's Rep 103, 109) Mr Justice Hobhouse said that in considering that issue one must have regard to the overall position between the parties and when the plaintiff was attempting to achieve by service, the overall position included looking at any allegation that one side had misled the other, thereby putting itself in a position to serve a notice which it might not otherwise have been enabled to.

Mr Boyle submitted that Barlow Lyde & Gilbert had deliberately misled Frere Cholmeley Bischoff as to Ernst & Young's intentions. Mr Hirst had candidly admitted devising a plan that Barlow Lyde & Gilbert should secure carriage of the order so that service of Ernst & Young's notice should anticipate or frustrate service of Butte's counterclaim, and if it was improper, he appealed.

His Lordship would not say "improper", but would say "imprudent", because of the predictable difficulty of carrying it through without prevarication, and in particular of deciding when proper professional conduct required the plan to be aborted.

His Lordship then considered in detail the evidence and held that Ernst & Young's notice had to be set aside.

Solicitors: Barlow Lyde & Gilbert; Frere Cholmeley Bischoff.

Excessive treatment of simple concept

Pavel v Sony Corporation and Others

Before Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Hobhouse and Lord Justice Aldous (Judgment March 21)

Excessive elaboration of a patent case by all the parties, resulting in a lengthy trial of a simple concept in the Patents County Court, was criticised by the Court of Appeal, in dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff patent holder, Andreas Pavel, from orders made by Judge Ford sitting in the Patents County Court on March 1, 1993.

Mr Alastair Wilson, QC and Mr Richard Arnold, neither of whom appeared below, for the plaintiff; Mr Anthony Watson, QC, who did not appear below, and Mr Guy Burdell for Sony Corporation; Mr Richard Miller, QC, for Toshiba Corporation.

LORD JUSTICE ALDOUS said that the Patents County Court was established to provide a cheap and quick method of resolving patent disputes. The patent in the present case had 2½ pages of written description which could be understood without any scientific help.

Despite that, the parties pleaded cases were set out in 261 pages with extensive annexes. There were nearly eight days of hearings about interlocutory disputes and the trial lasted nearly four weeks.

The plaintiff ended up needing legal aid and the defendants expended a considerable amount of costs.

It was apparent from the transcript that the trial proceeded with both parties chasing every point, whether material or not. Whether the fault for those lamentable

events was that of the procedure adopted or something else was not for his Lordship to decide.

However, some alteration was necessary if the purposes of the Patents County Court were to be achieved.

LORD JUSTICE HOBHOUSE said he agreed about the excessive elaboration of the proceedings. The procedure adopted was disproportionate to the issues to be tried.

There was both an over-elaboration of the pre-trial procedures and a failure to use the preparatory procedures to limit the scope of the trial. They achieved the worst of both worlds. The result had been inefficiency, delay and excessive cost.

LORD JUSTICE NEILL said that the patent application claimed that the invention related "to an audio listening apparatus, including a belt, for the hearing of music and other sounds in high fidelity stereophonic reproduction". The concept was a simple one and could be readily understood.

The Court of Appeal in *Chaplin Patents Holding Co Inc v Group Lotus plc* (The Times January 12, 1994) pointed out that the Patents County Court was established to handle the shorter and less complex patent actions and in order to effect a saving in costs.

It was plain beyond argument that in the present case savings in time and expense had not been achieved.

Solicitors: Maycock's (who were not instructed below); Baker & McKenzie; Lawrence Jones (who were not instructed below).

Using same lawyer

In re a Bankrupt (No 400 of 1995)

Where real difficulties were foreseen in identifying and recovering assets for a bankrupt's estate, and no difficulties in quantifying any creditor's debts were expected, retention by his trustee of the largest creditor's solicitor could be of great advantage to all with any risk of a conflict of interest no more than a distant possibility.

Mr Justice Robert Walker so held in the Chancery Division March 15 when dismissing an appeal by the bankrupt from the refusal by District Judge Joly to

set aside an order authorising the retainer by his trustee of such a solicitor to advise and assist him in the administration of the estate.

HIS LORDSHIP said that where there was a real risk of confidential information misappropriation or being misused, the court would treat that as paramount but here the solicitors were willing to undertake not to use, without leave, in pending litigation by the bankrupt against their client, any documents which they saw in their capacity as solicitors to the trustee.

That, in his Lordship's judgment, was the appropriate way to deal with the problem.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

NO. 000795 OF 1995

IN THE MATTER OF

HARVEY WEISSMAN

(HOLDINGS) LTD

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 15th March 1995, confirming the appointment of the said Mr Justice Robert Walker as liquidator of the above company, is hereby published for the information of the public.

DATED 15th March 1995

NORRISON ROSE

Solicitors for the Company

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

NO. 000795 OF 1995

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THEATRE 1
Hell, it seems,
is *Disgracefully Yours*, Richard O'Brien's feeble new night of rock and smut



THEATRE 2
The sleazy side of Swansea: *Flesh* is an aimless but lively show about bodies bought and sold

THE TIMES ARTS



JAZZ
The magnificent Cassandra Wilson applies her smoky contralto to a superbly eclectic range of songs



MUSIC
Veteran touch: the 82-year-old George Lloyd conducts the premiere of his latest choral work

JAZZ

Hues of the blues

HEAVY with the musky odour of joss-sticks and filled with assorted guitars, the odd mandolin and a plethora of gongs, chimes and hand drums, the stage suggested that a species of New Age folk music was about to be played. American singer Cassandra Wilson's first selection, Neil Young's wistful ballad *Harvest Moon*, did little to dispel this notion. In a languorous, smoky contralto, she drew out the song's plaintive, sentimental lyrics over a minimal but effective backing of steel guitar and softly chattering percussion, lightly decorated with the occasional cascade of harmonics from the band's musical director, guitarist Brandon Ross.

Son House's chilling *Death Letter Blues*, however, immediately shifted the scene firmly from Malibu to Wilson's birthplace, Mississippi, and — courtesy chiefly of Robert Johnson, whose classic blues 32-20 and *Hellhound on My Trail* were the highlights of her subsequent 90-minute set — the spirit of the Delta

blues hovered over the rest of the performance.

Wilson, the daughter of jazz musician Herman B. Fowles, started her musical life as a folk singer, subsequently joined a blues band, and rose to fame in 1980s New York with cutting-edge jazz figures such as Steve Coleman and Henry Threadgill, so her eclecticism is hard-earned and wholly uncontrived. In addition, she eschews gratuitous novelty in the songs she selects, always showing them in a new and unexpected light by approaching them in a highly personal manner.

Thus she managed to replace the bleak anguish of Hank Williams's *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* with a gentle, meditative melancholy without doing undue violence to the composer's intentions, and her brooding version of U2's *Love Is Blindness* retained all the song's earnestness while jettisoning its bombast. In similar fashion she transformed the Monkees' *Last Train to Clarksville* from uncomplicated high-school fun-seeking to serious lovers' tryst, and imbued Van Morrison's *Tupelo Honey* with a languid sensuality lacking in the original.

Although both the band and she showed some rough edges, she left the audience on their feet, shouting for more.

CHRIS PARKER

THEATRE: Richard O'Brien goes through Hell; plus sins of the flesh in Croydon

Repent, sinners, repent

Disgracefully Yours
Comedy

Somewhere in my memory-bank is the voice of a vicar, grimly menacing me and my brethren with an afterlife consisting of agonising, unending fire. I have in say that I am far more intimidated by the Hell to which Richard O'Brien hospitably invites us in *Disgracefully Yours*, peopled as it apparently is by fun-loving devils who spend eternity singing car-splintering rock songs and making dismal, rather smutty jokes. I vow that, starting tomorrow, these pages will radiate peace and charity and, whenever they can, help little old ladies across the road.

Starting tomorrow, let me repeat. I admired O'Brien's musical spoof of B-movies as much as anyone who did not actually wear an anorak emblazoned "I love The Rocky Horror Show", but he cannot be allowed to get away with stuff as awesomely feeble as this. Usually when people wander in and out during a show, as they did on and off during *Disgracefully Yours*, I mutter "sit down" in their direction. This time I was inwardly begging everyone between me and the stage to stand up and keep standing.

The curtain rises on two women and a man in spangled frock coats wiggling and hopping in front of what appears to be a vast, tattered, black plastic bag. Hell, they confide, is now a "groovy and happy place", and by way of proving it, on sidles a smirking O'Brien as an updated Mephistopheles. He, too, sports a frock coat, plus cloven clogs and, sticking out of his bald white head, two tiny warts that are presumably meant to be horns. Out of his rear end comes a pink, twirly tail ending in an arrow that seems to point everywhere except the place I was soon longing to go, which was the exit.

Anyway, he proceeds to sing a large number of upbeat and occasionally even tuneful songs composed by himself and, in between them, to enunciate his theology. This is that Hell is now closed to sinners, trainspotters, and men, indeed everyone who does not love sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. It is Club Inferno plc, "the party place for people who want to party forever". Before long, he has put on a pink suit, the three-person chorus have donned frilly pink skirts, and they all proceed energetically to party for what indeed seems like for ever.

I cannot judge the lyrics, except the few helpfully printed in the programme, because they are inaudible. I can only say that if O'Brien's ode to himself is typical ("makes you stammer with his infernal glamour", "a slick looker, a philosophical hooker") then the band of Black Angels should turn their instruments up still higher. But I do have a view on his wit. That gaseous substance should be turned off before it finishes off the ozone layer.

There are jokes about Dirty Gerrie. THE subject, of course, is human flesh, at least from time to time, prostituted flesh. The four youngsters from the Swansea-based, aptly named Frantic Assembly, present themselves in various guises, girl tart, boy tart, lovers, despairers, but though nobody could dispute their limbo-threatening energy, the argument of this 80-minute show is a wandering thread.

The limbs they threaten are their own. Time and again the choreography devised for them by Christine Devaney (from V-Tol Dance Company) requires them to fling their bodies onto the floor. Korina Biggs dies in Scott Graham's arms, collapses, is hauled up and goes down again. Likewise Cait Davis becomes a dead weight for Steven Hoggett to hold and drop.



Infernal nuisance: a devilish Richard O'Brien horns in as the Lord of Darkness in *Disgracefully Yours*

meaning Goethe, and Joan of Arc, "a right flaky little pain in the arse", who inexplicably came to Hell and fell in love with a centaur that was "hung like a horse". There are cracks about the meaning of the words succubus and incubus ("in and suck are the clues here") and God and Lucie, alias Lucifer, who were close "but not so

close they were the subject of gossip". "I got to the bottom of Sodom," says O'Brien in the breathless evangelist's shriek that passes for his voice, "since there was no tomorrow in Gomorrah." After some 100 minutes of this, imagine what it was like to be told that he loved us in the audience so much that, "hunky, funky and spunky" as we

were, we could join him in Hell. More fervently than ever, I determined to turn over a new leaf. The thought of being loved for eternity by this ghastrly, boneheaded old hippie is enough to turn anyone's mind to hopes of Heaven.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Strong meat served in a stew of confusion

Flesh
Croydon Warehouse

Separately they crash on to the ground, or with a partner, spring up and do so again. Some sequences come with sexual gestures, in another they jump on Bibles; in yet others the emotions are unclear and seem just generalised rage or discontent.

The four are a likeable bunch, and three of them performed in Frantic's last two shows, *Klub* and its physical, not very verbal version of *Look Back in Anger*. Graham and Hoggett look in their twenties but the girls look impossibly young, al-

most jailbait, adding a frisson to their accounts of servicing men in Cardiff hotels or dancing in their lingerie at Japanese conventions.

In their boots and black suits they begin by telling us about their desirable features, in the style of a sex ad, then turn the telescope and describe us — only guessing, of course, only guessing — which segues into the appraisal

ing comments of a pimp. We hear what they want the money for, and the girls recall teenage flirtations with daddy. The boys' childhoods remain a blank, though drama teachers seem to have found their charms enticing.

Throughout these confessions they use their own names, in a text written for them by Spencer Hazel. He reveals an unusual fondness for biblical quotation and makes rather too liberal a use of Dylan Thomas's wordplay — though London Lighthouse and Mary Whitehouse make

a nice pairing. Twice Graham calls out "Stop!" and sexual behaviour freezes. At the end, when the other three are doing a fair amount of groping, he throws a bucket of water over them.

I confess I could not decide what the show was telling us. Customers are not dismissed with contempt, neither economic hardship nor the dangers are emphasised, and there is not a single mention of drugs — extraordinary in a play about 1990s youth. The performers have an easy, conversational style that is certainly appealing, and are also pretty sexy, but while I am certain they want to convey something really urgent and moral, they have not yet found the signs and images to do so.

JEREMY KINGSTON

New ways with old influences

CONCERTS

LPO/Haitink
Philharmonia/Lloyd
Festival Hall

ON THE hundredth anniversary of its premiere, Dvořák's Cello Concerto was the centre of an all-Dvořák programme by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, with Bernard Haitink as the guest conductor. An ailing Yo-Yo Ma had to withdraw as soloist, and his replacement was the Norwegian Truls Mork, whose finely poised playing was no less attuned to what many consider the composer's crowning achievement.

It was in no sense a blockbuster performance. Mork is too sensitive a musician to overplay his hand, or even his bowing arm, to make a superficial effect. Instead he sustains a lyrical flow of eloquent tone, confident in its highlights and romantic in its warmth of expression. A particular virtue was the hushed poetry of his soft playing.

Haitink is not a conductor often associated with Dvořák, although he no doubt performed plenty of his music in his pre-operative days, and he was a sympathetic advocate from the opening *Slavonic Rhapsody* (Op.45 No.3) onwards. This bowed along with splendid momentum and rhythmic impetus, and a blend of instrumental colour from the orchestral playing that extended into the concerto as well, where the pitfalls offered by lethargic tempo were firmly avoided.

Haitink also showed no inclination to indulge excessive sentiment in the *New World Symphony*, preferring to generate a resolute spirit in the music's progress, abetted by individual instrumental colouring of which Thomas Davey's cor anglais solo in the large movement was only the most prominent example.

NOTHING if not dynamic in his 83rd year, the Cornish-born composer George Lloyd has delivered himself of a major new choral work and summoned the energy to conduct its premiere through almost an hour's duration. A *Litany* is a florid setting of verses from John Donne's

17th-century religious poem of that name, commissioned for the Guildford Choral Society.

The choir's intensely committed singing was one of the virtues of the work's first hearing, as was the richly colourful, sometimes overcrowded, textures from the Philharmonia Orchestra. The soprano Janice Watson and baritone David Wilson-Johnson sustained their solos purposefully, even when the sheer weight and diversity of Lloyd's orchestration, redolent with brass and drums, rendered much of the vocal writing difficult to disentangle.

In style the work is a throwback to the English oratorio tradition of yesteryear, with generous tunes over firmly anchored harmonies, and an occasional tendency to extend a phrase for rather more than it is worth. It is divided into four movements. One is a thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary engagingly set for unaccompanied chorus, and the solo soprano sings the praises of the "blessed, glorious Trinity" with unabashed fervour. Early pictorial Stravinsky comes to mind at the start of a long final movement, wherein the choral writing grows increasingly ecstatic as the words implore a divine response to prayer, ending in a major-key paean of confidence.

Reaching out to Lloyd was no great stretch from Elgar earlier in the programme, when *The Music Makers* was made to sound unduly lugubrious under the conducting of Hilary Davan Wetton, music director of the Guildford Choir. But the eloquent contralto solo of Catherine Wyn Rogers was a delight.

NOEL GOODWIN

Battling Britten

OPERA

The Rape of Lucretia
RNCM, Manchester

voices to cast it is another question. Certainly, the two baritones — Adrian Fowler as Tarquinius and Peter Mollay as Junius — and the solitary bass — Richard Wood as a particularly impressive Collatinus — are more than adequate. The more dubious casting is Christine Rice as Lucretia; although it is a full-scale contralto part, her voice is too heavy until her lament at the end, where the expressive imperative and the vocal colouring most effectively coincide. As for the Male and Female Chorus, one could wish for more control at the top of the range from Alberto Janelli and more clarity in general from Polly Kirwan.

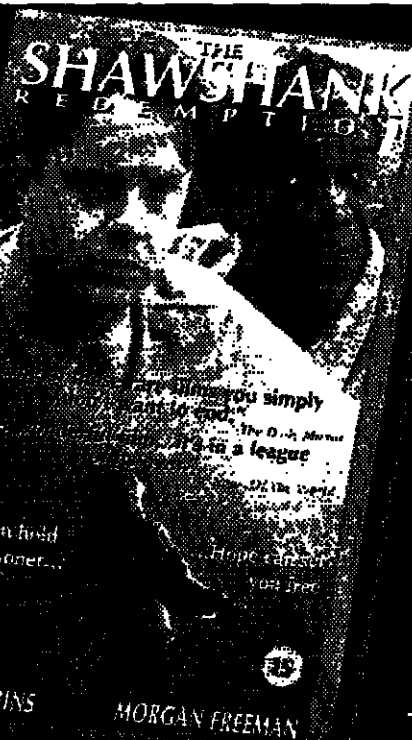
Matt English's set is too spacious and too bright for claustrophobia, which is an essential element of the piece, but Stefan Janski's production is tactful in avoiding the she-really-wanted-it implications of Ronald Duncan's libretto.

GERALD LARNER

"THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE MENTIONS A CLASSIC MOVIE AND SAYS 'THEY DON'T MAKE THEM LIKE THAT ANYMORE!' YOU CAN NOW TELL THEM THEY DO — THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION IS PROOF OF THAT."

News of the World

BARRY NORMAN'S
TOP 10
FILMS OF
1995



Nominated for 7 Oscars
including Best Film
and Best Actor

WIDESCREEN

Special Widescreen
Edition on video and
VIDEOCD

OUT NOW
TO BUY ON VIDEO





POP 4

From local hero to world star: how Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan won a global audience for Qawwali music



POP 5

Cast reveal how to meet aliens, write hippy lyrics, and still get into the Top 20

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 6

If you want to hear a German woman called Billie Ray sing soul, Miss Martin's here



TOMORROW

Isabelle Huppert makes her British stage debut: read Benedict Nightingale's verdict

Beats with steel

THE world of pop is not over-endowed with German singer who adopt country cliché names and display a penchant for soulful ballads and modern dance beats. This is, in fact, a category with only one member: Billie Ray Martin.

Her eccentric road to fame led her last year to the hit *Your Living Arms*, a song that won both a solid dance-floor following and critical credibility, the latter partly because of her early associations with Electric 101 and the Grid.

But it was the mixture of local passion and pulsing rhythms that guaranteed the song its success, and her live show follows the same formula. From the opening *Hands Up and Amen* to the final *You and I (Keep Holding On)*, her voice takes us back to the

Billie Ray Martin
UEA, Norwich

1960s sounds of Stax and Atlantic, while the drum sound whisks us forward into contemporary clubland.

Not that it is quite this simple. Her dress — a black number slit to the waist, and embellished by a silver-ringed belt — bears the mark of early 1970s disco, as do her strictly choreographed dance routines. Her singing, meanwhile, conjures up the dignified gospel of Aretha Franklin and the bare emotion of Lorraine Ellison. On *Dead-line for my Memories*, she bawled unseen lovers, her voice swooping from resentful anger to desperate pleading. And below all this rumbled the techno beats.

Martin added one further ingredient to her distinctive musical concoction: a pedal steel guitar. It joined the keyboards, percussion and backing singer that made up the rest of her band. So the gently rolling *Still Waters*, with its swooning guitar trills, sounded as if it were emerging from a fortuitously mistuned radio picking up several stations at once.

Occasionally she appeared to lose interest — her big hit was treated perfunctorily. But mostly she was enraptured, and she managed to fashion a quirky, inspired order out of her highly personal collection of elements.

JOHN STREET

David Toop meets Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, ubiquitous superstar of world music



After the likes of Peter Gabriel and Eddie Vedder, Canadian Michael Brook is the latest westerner to call on Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's magic

Under a clouded night sky in Lahore, 10,000 spectators caught up in the grip of musical ecstasy. Chanting and dancing, they are anticipating the arrival on stage of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the 47-year-old singer currently making the transition from national treasure to worldwide celebrity.

All around me, men and women have been falling into trances, the wilder ones being dragged out of the arena by groups of soldiers. Now the build-up to the main event begins in time-honoured fashion. "The great music star in Pakistan," bellows the MC, who then launches into a list of some of the films that have used Nusrat's devotional songs in unlikely and sometimes controversial settings: *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Bandit Queen*, *Natural Born Killers*.

Best all-rounder since Botham?

The following day, still reeling from the intensity of the concert, I attempt to find some logic in the many contradictions raised by the congenial, reserved and reticent Khanshab. Nusrat lives in the expensive Lahore suburb of Faisal Town, his house guarded day and night by a uniformed guard armed with a machinegun. Inside, the music room walls are hung with photographs of Nusrat in the company of rock star Peter Gabriel, the inevitable Imran Khan, General Zia and other notables. Despite random power cuts, constant visitors

and the shrilling of mobile phones, the peaceful atmosphere offers a respite from the noise barrage of car horns that rages in the street outside.

For many years, Nusrat was a frequent flier, performing concerts and recording cassettes for Pakistan and Indian fans living in all corners of the globe. His association with Peter Gabriel's *Real World* Records and the *Woman* Festival, however, saw a new phase in his career. World music's audiences were stunned by the passion and energy of Qawwali, the devotional music form of which Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is regarded as the greatest living exponent.

For a while, Peter Gabriel's commitment to Nusrat seemed almost an indulgence. Now, the steady stream of releases and concert appearances is paying off. Two songs recorded with Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder have been acclaimed in America as highlights of the *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack and a duet with Björk is mooted. Meanwhile *Night Song*, the new album produced by Canadian guitarist Michael Brook, proves that religious and musical traditions can survive and develop without compromise in the digital age.

Some of the puzzles created by such developments are difficult to fathom. I ask Nusrat how he is able to negotiate such a bewildering maze of musical styles: one week in India recording Bollywood film songs, then off to Wiltshire to lay vocals over Brook's fusion of ambient, rock and trip-hop, then another week in America with Vedder, singing country-tinged ballads with slide guitars, then back to the home crowd in Pakistan for lengthy performances of traditional Qawwali.

"Because I have the basic knowledge of classical music and I have learnt all styles," he says. "There is no difficulty in adjusting. This is part of my family tradition." Not completely satisfied with this answer, I asked Brook for his impressions.

"I think we can't map our idea of the sacred and profane on the way he thinks about it," Brook says. "He's not exactly spreading the word, but he's spreading the sacred music. There's no such thing as bad publicity."

Nonetheless, Nusrat is discerning about his collaborations. He sings with consistent fervour and astonishing technique, although a cassette of his music that I purchase at Karachi airport turns out to be a fairly resistible home-grown hybrid of lugubrious synthetic strings and crude drum machine programming.

Perhaps one of the keys to this versatility is the Sufi religion itself. Qawwali is a musical and poetic expression of Sufism, the mystical and, in certain respects, relatively liberal branch of Islam. The aim of the music is to elevate the audience to a spiritual plane. To this end, there is no substitute for hearing Qawwali in concert. For the boisterous crowd in Gaddafi Stadium, Nusrat and his group of vocalists, percussion and harmoniums launched straight into a short set of greatest hits to create immediate frenzy.

Two nights earlier they had performed to an invited audience of aficionados — although not, as was rumoured, the Princess of Wales. With the original venue waterlogged by heavy rain, the substitute hall turned out to be a characteristically decrepit cinema hidden within the old city's maze of dark, winding streets. Here, the poetic elaborations were developed at a more subtle

pace, the ecstatic repetitions burning on a longer fuse.

One question arises without fail when religious music is performed to audiences from other faiths or no faith at all. What can the music possibly mean when it is plucked out of its natural context?

"The message of Qawwali is not only for Muslims," Nusrat says. "There have been very great people in all religions. Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, they all had good Sufis. The message of the Sufis is the same — how to reach to God — but they all have different ways."

So Sufism can be seen as a flexible, humanitarian belief system that sits at the core of a variety of religious practices. Nusrat appears to be applying this attitude to music, using his rhythmic and melodic virtuosity over Massive Attack's urban dub or Bally Sago's Asian hip-hop. The integrity stays intact because he is able to convey an unusual intensity of feeling to audiences, no matter how wide the linguistic and cultural gap.

In Pakistan, tension is rife. At one extreme is satellite television, featuring a flood of increasingly erotic film music clips from India; at the other extreme, the hardline mullahs condemn all singing and dancing as contrary to Islamic beliefs. With unshakeable devotion to the idea of music as spiritual expression, Nusrat sails on a wave of global popularity through these hazardous waters. As an improviser, he ranks alongside jazz greats such as John Coltrane, but his chameleon-like ability to blend into all environments places him at the forefront of music-making.

"What I have to do is ensure that the beauty of the work does not get destroyed," he says. "But at the same time the new generation gets the message too. That is a lot of work."

© Night Song is released on Monday by Real World

Power and the morning glory

A fledgeling Oasis with hippy lyrics and a space cadet at the wheel — Cast achieve perfection

In his spare time, Julian Cope makes up words. One of his best was "drude", a cross between "druid" and "dude". It's a highly appreciative term for those who are spiritually cool; who are plugged into their souls and attempt to broadcast some kind of higher consciousness.

Cast's John Power is most certainly a drude. His songs tackle subjects pop has ignored since the 1960s — the importance of being in touch with the land, at one with humanity, and constantly seeking a higher truth. Any kind of spirituality has been embarrassed out of pop since punk put cynicism and nihilism top of the agenda, dismissing any attempt at widening pop's reach as "hippy rubbish". That Cast have managed to write almost exclusively about "hippy" topics and still had a brace of Top 20 singles and a No 1 album is a tribute to Power's almost uncanny ability to write searing, dizzyly harmonic choruses that remind one of the fledgeling Oasis.

But it's this traditional rock element that has so vexed Cast's detractors. Their debut album, *All Change*, contains four fine singles and the sensuously epic *History*, but still seems too earth-bound, too four-square and regular to convey the thrill of Power's singular talent. The first time I heard Cast as they should be was in a tiny, box-like room in Manchester. A DJ, engineer and the band were also squeezed into what was, essentially, a converted shower cubicle, but Cast sang out so sweet and loud that I thought my skin would sweat sheet gold as I soaked it up from 4ft away. There was something wide and joyful here, the kind of music that aerates the blood and puts electricity in the skin. However, on record it generally sounds like six dustmen throwing the band into a pit.

"Ah, I wrote that album four years ago," Power sighs, stretching out on his hotel bed and drinking thirstily from a bottle of water. "The songs I was writing were a cry for attention, a declaration of intent. I'm still learning. None of us really knows that much about playing instruments, and writing songs is a difficult thing that you gradually master — I still don't quite know

where to go to find the songs. You find that if you induce certain moods in yourself, then the music will come. But it's like mental exercise, you have to work up slowly, or you'll break your brain." He giggles, a Liverpudlian gurgle that breaks into a joyful yelp half-way through.

Another subject that has given Cast's detractors a field day is Power's almost unequalled qualifications as King of the Space Cadets. On top of his hippy lyrics and almost surreal back-to-the-land monologues ("I'm vegetarian, but if I killed the pig myself, I'd be more inclined to eat meat — you know, if you kill it yourself that shows respect"), Power has also had a run-in with aliens.

"I don't really care if anyone believes me or not," he says. "I was lying in bed, and I felt a presence, and a raspy voice in my ear said: 'Human'. That's it, really." He shrugs. "People say I'm off my head, but there still isn't an internationally agreed system of measuring sanity, so how would they know?"

"Maybe it's the drugs, I think taking hallucinogens is essential to human evolution — there was that piece in *The Sunday Times* recently that suggested that the reason we all evolved from apes into human beings was that tribes of apes migrated through Africa towards Europe, and ate their way through fields of magic mushrooms on the way. And it was the hallucinations that triggered the creative developments in our brains."

"I've stopped taking acid now, though," he adds. "It was doing my head in."

Now he gets his highs more naturally. "When this band started, I was living in a huge, broken house in Sefton Park, Liverpool — the landlord was mad, he just forgot to charge us rent. We used to rehearse in the front room, hours on end writing songs, working out what we wanted to say. And I'd feel so happy imagining what it would be like to play these songs to people, and have them understand."

"And tonight, I played those same songs to 2,000 people — and more than half of them knew. I could see it in their eyes. And that makes me the happiest man in the world."

© The single, *Walkaway*, is released on Monday by Polydor

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EDUCATION

John O'Leary introduces *The Times* five-day guide, starting on Monday, to your child's progress through the national curriculum

Parent primer for the classroom tests

After eight years of planning, piloting and arguing, the Government's testing programme in schools will be fully implemented this spring. Almost two million pupils aged seven, 11 and 14, will have their progress through the national curriculum assessed. Parents will find out how their children are doing and, for the first time, there will be some measure of primary schools' performance.

Teachers' acceptance of the tests (grudging or otherwise) has altered the climate in schools to such an extent that revision sessions are becoming commonplace. A daily series in *The Times* next week will enable parents to play their part in the process.

Many families remain baffled by the tests, unsure whether they matter to their children's future and taken aback by the unfamiliar nature of the papers. For all three

age groups, the aim is to identify strengths and weaknesses, rather than to aid selection. But, in schools where any form of streaming is in operation, the results may influence future grouping.

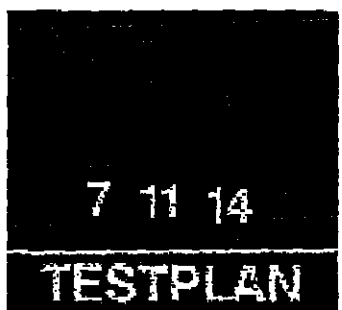
Most 11-year-olds will be left in no doubt of the importance of the results to their school because they will be used to compile the first primary school league tables. The rankings, which will be published early next year, may prove highly influential in parents' choices of school.

For 14-year-olds, the tests are designed to be a step on the way to GCSE — for many the nearest they will come to a formal examination until then. The results can offer reassurance or a warning signal.

Testplan will provide sample questions from last year's tests, with tips from teachers on what to expect and how best to prepare. The series will help parents to put the results in context, unravelling the national curriculum's assessment system and showing how pupils fared last year.

For the newest tests, at 11, *The Times* has joined forces with the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) to produce three books of sample questions and advice. The separate books on English, mathematics and science are published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The 11-year-olds will be the first to have taken more than one set of "Key Stage" tests, having been



among the assessment pioneers at the age of seven. The results should be a guide to their progress during the years of junior school.

The tests have been the most controversial element of the Government's school reforms launched in 1988. Criticised when

they were introduced for seven-year-olds — and boycotted when the process reached secondary schools — national assessment is still unpopular among teachers.

Recent research among members of the generally moderate Association of Teachers and Lecturers showed that most staff still resented the time spent on last year's tests. Few felt that they revealed anything new about their pupils and there was a general belief that teachers' own assessments were undervalued.

There is little likelihood of further resistance from the teaching profession next term, however, when the tests are scheduled to take place. Although the National Union of Teachers is to debate a

motion at its annual conference, demanding that the boycott be restored, the union's rules make action improbable.

Other unions, though unhappy with the introduction of more league tables, and critical of some of last year's marking, are not contemplating industrial action. More than 90 per cent of schools set the tests and reported the results in 1995, and the SCAA expects the proportion to rise again in May.

Ministers' original testing plans have been scaled down in line with the curriculum itself. As a result, the tests are limited to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with seven-year-olds assessed entirely by their teachers.

The papers have been designed to mirror classroom activity while concentrating on key areas. The first run of Testplan, last year, was welcomed by the SCAA as an encouragement to parents to involve themselves in their children's preparation. The signs are that this trend will accelerate in the weeks ahead.

Some relaxed familiarisation with the tests, using the sample questions to be published next week, should help pupils and reassure parents. The series begins on Monday with a timetable of this year's tests and a look at what will be expected of seven-year-olds. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will focus on 11-year-olds, with Friday devoted to the tests at 14.

The Parents' Guide to National Tests, published by HMSO, on sale at £4.95 each for English, mathematics and science.

Launchpad for a life in politics

The NUS presidency is a breeding ground for rising stars of new Labour, says David Charter

You appear on *Newsnight*, the *Today* programme and *Question Time*. You have to chair an annual conference of 2,000 rowdy delegates and manage a staff of 80. Occasionally you have to fight deportations, or debate with government ministers. All by the time you are 25. No wonder the presidency of the National Union of Students is a breeding ground for new MPs.

The "mainstreaming" of the student movement is also evident from the progression of recent leaders who would once have espoused radical communism but now advocate new Labour. Four of the last six presidents are being lined up by the party for seats at the next general election.

They hope to emulate Jack Straw, the NUS's most auspicious old boy, who has risen from the presidency in 1969-71 to become Shadow Home Secretary.

Mr Straw's stewardship of the NUS is remembered for his attempts to make the union a serious political force by opposing calls for violent action after the 1968 French student revolt. In this sense, the class of '96 are his true heirs. The NUS has at times been a refuge for extremists, but recent presidents, who since 1982 have all been Labour supporters, have tried to stamp out the sit-in mentality.

They include the current incumbent, Jim Murphy, a Scot

who has yet to complete his law and politics degree at Strathclyde University but, at 28, is on the shortlist to fight Glasgow Eastwood. His predecessor Lorna Fitzsimons, also 28, has four rivals for the Labour ticket in Rochdale.

She succeeded Stephen Twigg, who at 29 has been selected to fight against Michael Portillo in Enfield Southgate. Phil Woolas, holder of the office in 1984-86, is now a full-time officer for the GMB union. After one disappointment at the polls, in the Littleborough and Saddle-

'It's an experience most people don't get till they're 50'

worth by-election, he has bounced back to win the nomination to fight the reorganised constituency in the same area.

These are merely the politically successful ones. Not one president since Straw has failed to progress to a high profile career, often with a dash of politics thrown in.

Take Sue Slipman, for example, president in 1977-78 and the first female leader of

the NUS. A staunch member of the Communist Party while in office, Slipman changed her clothes to become a founder member of the short-lived Social Democratic Party. As an SDP candidate she fought unsuccessfully in two general elections — 1983 (in Basildon) and 1987 (Hayes and Harlington) — before renouncing party politics upon the merger of her party with the Liberals.

Ms Slipman, who ran the National Council for One Parent Families before becoming director of the London Training and Enterprise Council last year, is in no doubt why the top job in the student movement makes for budding MPs and high-profile personalities.

"Being NUS president is the most enormously enriching experience in which, at a very young age, you get to run an organisation which employs a large number of people, run a conference of 2,000 screaming Trotskyists, and negotiate with government ministers. It gives you a position most people do not normally get to until they are in their fifties."

This helps to explain why NUS presidents achieve success early in life. Several have made their mark in the media.

David Aaronovich (president 1980-82) reached the top of the BBC's home affairs department before becoming a writer for *The Independent*. Trevor Phillips (the first black president in 1978-80) became a



Jack Straw, in 1970, opposed violent NUS action; Jim Murphy, top, and Stephen Twigg could be his natural heirs

presenter at London Weekend Television and rose to become head of current affairs before going freelance.

Maevie Sherlock (president 1988-90) runs Ukosa, an organisation which represents the interests of overseas students. Vicky Phillips (1986-88) is a solicitor after a stint as nat-

ional women's officer at Labour Party headquarters. John Randall (1973-75) worked for a large public service union before becoming director of professional standards at the Law Society. Digby Jacks (1971-73) became an official with the MSF union after a brief teaching career.

But it is in politics that NUS presidents seem destined to make their most public mark. Neil Stewart (1982-84) worked for the former Labour leader Neil Kinnock from 1989 to 1992 and now runs his own conference, events and PR firm in London. Charles Clarke (president 1975-77), who was a

Kinnock aide for nine years, also runs a PR firm in the capital. Both men have been seeking Labour seats but so far without success — Mr Stewart missed out on Aberdeen at Christmas.

Lorna Fitzsimons (1992-94) is now a political consultant for a lobbying company in



London. She believes her chances of winning Rochdale, if selected, are high because of her track record in defeating the Conservatives.

"In my time in office, the Government tried to shut us down and we were the only Labour-led collective organisation to defeat them in 11 years," she says.

She agrees recent presidents have been on the "soft left" and is right behind the current drive to convince students that they have to pay for higher education through a fairer loan system.

Stephen Twigg (president 1990-92) seems to have amassed the classic CV in preparation for a new Labour seat in the Commons. He was elected to Islington council, in north London, within days of stepping down from the NUS presidency. Currently the Labour Party whip on the council, he is in a three-way contest for the leadership which will be decided next month.

Mr Twigg worked as parliamentary officer for Amnesty International and then for the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, before becoming an aide to Margaret Hodge, MP, in 1994. He has just left to work alongside Ms Fitzsimons.

"I joined the Labour Party at 15," he says. "The presidency put you through just about every political situation you will ever have to face."

The heir apparent at this year's NUS conference, which takes place next week in Blackpool, is another Scot, Douglas Trainer, the current president of NUS Scotland. He is the official Labour Student candidate for NJS presidency. Does he too aspire to reach Westminster?

"I think the career paths of my predecessors are very interesting but my main focus at the moment is to take NUS forward," says Mr Trainer. That's what they all said at 25.

Jonathan Sale continues his series on university days

It was a scene as ominous as any in the *Ruth Rendell* Mysteries which Janet Suzman has been filming for ITV. And it was real. A student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa during the late 1950s. Ms Suzman had an encounter with a man from the South African Special Branch. It was neither her work nor her acting that he wanted to discuss.

"He had a thick file marked with my name," she recalls. "He turned the pages slowly and I read them upside down. They had everywhere I'd been and everyone I'd spoken to. I was interviewed, not to say interrogated."

The secret policeman homed in on her planned journey to Europe. "My father said I should get visas for every country under the flightpath in case the plane came down. The Special Branch didn't like the idea of all these visas to African countries." Mozambique, a centre for gun-running, caused particular concern. Ms Suzman was not guilty as charged — in fact, she was not charged with anything — but she had always known that her cards were marked: for a start, she was the niece of Helen Suzman, the MP in lonely opposition to the Nationalist Government.

"In many respects it was a good time at 'Wits'. Life was full of interest and everybody was politically involved. But it was a very troubled time, a very bad time for the university. There was quite a lot of violence on the campus. It was packed with spies; poor students who needed a bit of money infiltrated the campus to report back to the Special Branch — 'The Greys' — and student cars were followed everywhere."

Racially mixed Witwatersrand was humming with opposition to the Extension of University Education Bill.



Janet Suzman

Acting as the Bad Student of Wits

When this became an Act in 1959, it sliced higher education into racial ghettos. "Known" — not affectionately — as the Academic Apartheid Bill, this was a massive blow to academic freedom. I didn't know at the beginning that I was going to leave South Africa but it became clear that this was the final straw.

"We were marching all the time, with banners saying 'Knowledge is colour-blind'. For two out of the three years I don't recall studying at all. It was an education in life rather than English and French, the subjects I was meant to be studying. Lectures seemed to get in the way of demonstra-

tions." Although a member of the dramatic society, she did not see herself as a budding actress. Yet her time on stage was not wasted: "I was so bad that it was going to be necessary to study this thing called acting."

"It was a sense of curiosity rather than overflowing ambition that brought me to drama school in London. We did a production of *Love's Labour's Lost* on Vespas. There was a production of *Julius Caesar* on the steps of the Neo-Classical Main Hall; for some reason I played Calpurnia as an Indian in a shocking pink sari."

She made her exit immediately after her finals. "The exams were held in temporary huts built during the war. There was no air-conditioning and the temperature was in the 90s and 100s; you had to wipe your hand on your clothes before writing so that your pen didn't slip out of your fingers."

Then she was off. Her flight, the visas for which had so upset the Special Branch, was a round-trip of Europe's cultural hotspots organised by the fine arts faculty. For her, it was a one-way ticket.

She has been back to university, this time as Visiting Professor at Westfield College, as it then was, in London. Her career as one of Britain's leading actresses has not prevented frequent visits to her homeland — "South Africa is so deep in my blood I have never lost my passion for it" — and it was there that she directed a play for the first time. She leaves in May to direct her latest production, Brecht's *Good Woman of Setzuan*: shifted to a South African setting, it is retitled *The Good Woman of Sharkville*. Any former secret policeman in the audience will remember the director as "The Bad Student of Witwatersrand".

We don't want bores

Universities demand social skills, says Brian Heap

the student sitting across the table from a sympathetic, friendly teacher, unwilling to subject pupils to unfriendly fire.

But at Brynston, the Dorset independent school, every university applicant faces an interview of half an hour with one or two outsiders, specialists in their subjects, with a video camera filming them. This is followed by a debriefing to

'One language applicant didn't know a noun from a verb'

highlight weaknesses. The aim is not to try to prime the student for the perfect interview but to eliminate any obvious failings.

Questionnaires completed by admissions tutors provide a useful insight into why students are spurned for non-academic reasons. One pointer is "lack of breadth of interests", for example on animal issues for veterinary science, and on social topics for applied social studies or social administration courses.

Business studies dons mention "lack of commercial interest and experience", while weaknesses in numeracy and literacy are also

cited as common failings, along with the inability to work in a team or take an active part in project discussions. Complaints are legion about poor communication skills, imperfect English and bad spelling on forms, with one language applicant not knowing the difference between a noun and a verb.

Lack of motivation and drive are also featured in some tutors' comments. One complained: "Some applicants aren't hungry enough. Others criticise pupils who just dream about being lawyers."

The ability to manage one's time is also given as a priority as well as "the ability to pick yourself up at an interview after a difficult start".

Typical complaints reflect their subject areas. In drama, for example, they complain about immaturity, poor interpersonal skills and lack of ability to respond to a challenge. Some applicants are badly advised at the outset. One boy arrived for a philosophy interview and asked the admissions panel to consider him for sports studies.

At the end of the day tutors seek several qualities and will reject the applicant who is unable to cope with questions about their studies. As one said: "We look for interviewees who respond positively to ideas, who can think on their feet, who can intelligently engage with critical issues and sustain an argument. If they don't evince any of these qualities, then we reject them."

Brian Heap is the author of *Degree Course Offers* (Trojan, £15.95).



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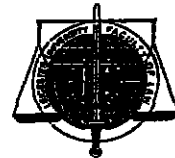
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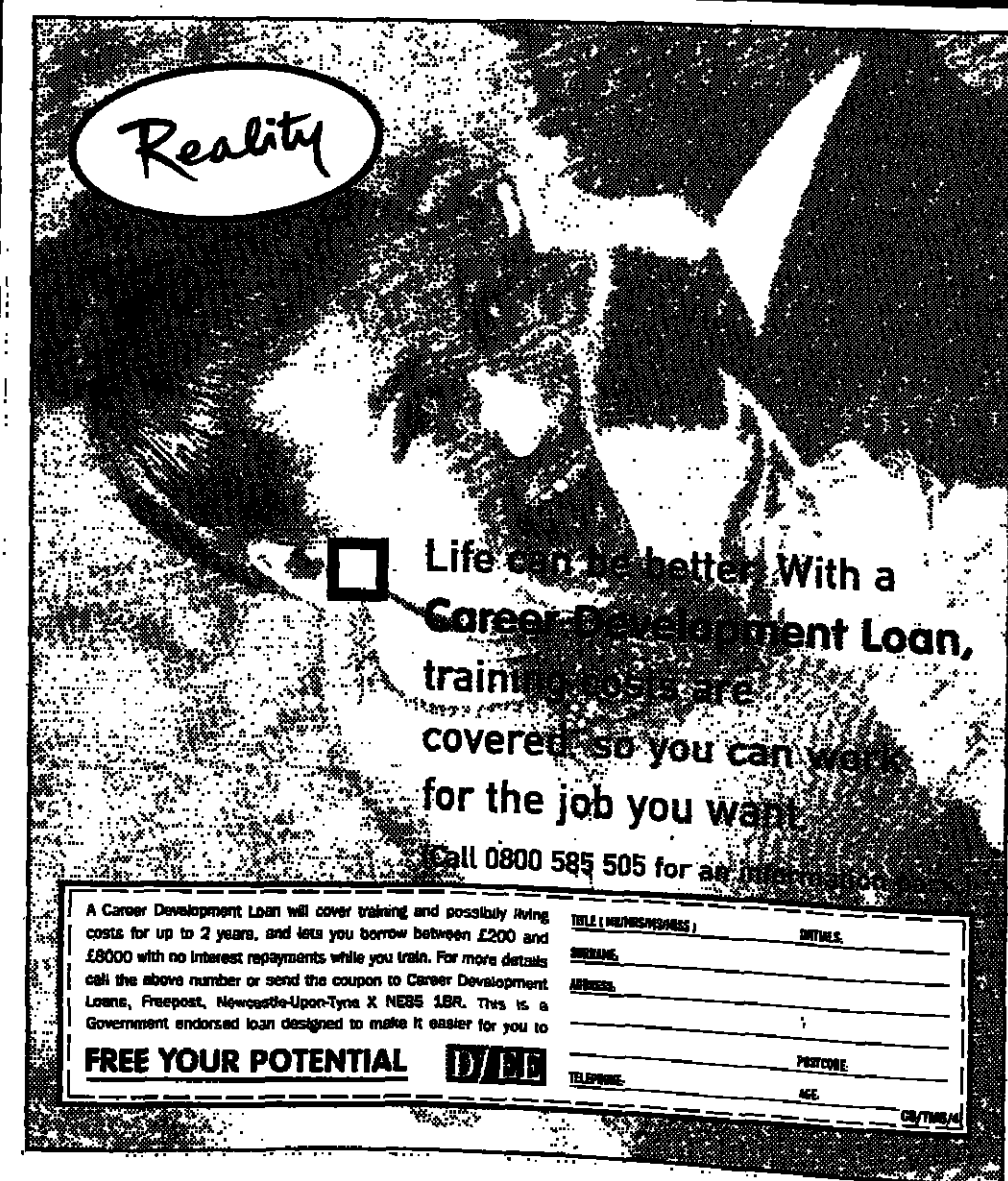
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Rivals left to fret over Eriksson's positive approach

FROM MEL WEBB IN LISBON

THE golfers of the PGA European Tour have been visited by all manner of impediments this season, and yesterday another variety of meteorological nastiness left players kicking their heels frustratedly as it caused a long delay before the Portuguese Open could get under way at Aroeira, ten miles south of Lisbon.

There was rain in Singapore, South Africa and Dubai, and the Catalan Open was reduced to 36 holes by gales. This time it was a heavy sea fret that crept in from the nearby Atlantic at dawn, which meant a delay of 2hr 10min and an incomplete first round. All that is needed to complete the set is fire, snow and a plague of locusts.

There was no fire yesterday, but there was heat of another kind as Klas Eriksson, the young Swede, lit the blue touch-paper and scorched round the course in 63, eight under par, to finish his day leading in the clubhouse by two shots. There were still dozens of players on the course as dusk fell, and if the fog clears off and minds its own business, the first round will be completed this morning.

Like most of his fellow competitors, Eriksson, 24, who leads Wayne Riley by two shots, and Russell Claydon

and Ricky Willison by three, found the soft, slow and spike-ridden greens a constant challenge to the assembly of a good score. However, a sequence of nine birdies in 11 holes from the 5th cut in the bud any small complaint that he might have had.

Riley's view on the putting surfaces was typical. "They look like they've just run the Grand National on them," he said. A slight exaggeration, perhaps, but you knew what he meant.

To be fair, the greenkeepers at Aroeira have been working

Results 39

under the most adverse conditions in the past few months; the amount of rain that has fallen here since December would have them positively salivating at Yorkshire Water. It did not alter the fact, though, that things were not easy... unless your name happened to be Klas Eriksson, that is. He dropped only one shot, on the short 4th, when he missed the green off the tee and failed to get up and down.

He might have slid towards the sort of diffident golf that has seen him miss the cut in every one of the four tournaments in

which he has played this season, but that dropped shot might have been the catalyst he needed to set off the violent reaction that followed.

Eriksson birdied the 5th with a pitching wedge to three feet, birdied the 6th with a 12-foot putt, picked up another shot on the 8th with an eight-iron to ten feet and a single putt, and reached the turn with another birdie from a foot at the 9th.

The next three holes were also brought to heel with aggressively accurate golf. At the 10th, a par-five of 538 yards, he needed a putt of only 12 inches, and he was ten inches closer than that at the 11th. He had to think about things a little more on the 12th, where he had to hole from ten feet for a birdie, and really messed things up at the 13th, where he got a mere par four.

Eriksson came into this tournament after being on the receiving end of a lecture from Rolf, his father, who preached the gospel of positive thinking. "He told me that if I got to two under, I must immediately look for three, then four, and so on," Eriksson said. "I tried to today." Birdies eight and nine, at the 14th and 15th, would seem to indicate that Eriksson Sr had made his point, with bells on.

Swedes winning mind games

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN PHOENIX

AT ANY given golf tournament, in any given week, in whatever part of the world, there is one certainty: if there is a Swede playing, there will be a Swede on the leaderboard. Yesterday, in the first round of the Standard Register Ping event here at Moon Valley, the dutiful player was Carin Hj Karlsson, who was three under par after ten holes, a shot behind Barb Mucha, of the United States, who started with an eagle three at the 10th.

Koch, née Hjalmarsson (hence the hiccup in the middle of her name), was one of the dew sweepers, alongside her compatriot, Catrin Nil-

mark-Wickberg (marriage explains the double-barrelled tendency). Nilmark, who holed the winning putt in the Solheim Cup at Dalmahoy, started with a birdie three but went out in 37, one over par, after a double-bogey six at the 9th.

Koch, 25, is in her second year on the US tour. In 1995 she earned a respectable \$129,313 (about £85,000) and was 48th on the money-list. "She's swinging well and has a good attitude," a seasoned observer said this week.

A good attitude is not something the Swedes acquire by accident. The Swedish Golf Federation's national team

programme, designed to make Sweden one of the best golf nations in the world, does not confine itself to technical matters. The mind and the whole being are involved, too. The main goal, according to documented philosophy, "is to give our players a chance to educate themselves in all aspects needed to succeed in the game of life and the game of golf." The first named of these areas is "attitude".

Alison Nicholas, an English Solheim Cup stalwart, went out in 38, one over par, after starting at the 10th, but Kathryn Marshall, of Scotland, was two under, having gone out in 35.



Allen, of Cambridge, summons intense concentration during the pistol shooting discipline of the Varsity modern pentathlon match

Oumpa's sixth discipline scores high

It is 3pm in a hall in Tonbridge, Kent. A Wizard-of-Oz of an invigilator has said: "Ladies, uncase your pistols." He then tells them to load, then shoot, then stop. Four young ear-muffed women, two each from Oxford and Cambridge, are now awaiting further orders, sitting with their heads in their hands like mourners who have arrived early for a funeral service.

They use air pistols, fire from a distance of ten metres, one shot per 40 seconds at a target with an inner and outer bull worth ten points; two exterior circles within the central black ring scoring nine and eight; the less accurate the shot, the lower the score. Perfection would be 200 from 20 shots. A score of 172 yields 1,000 modern pentathlon points.

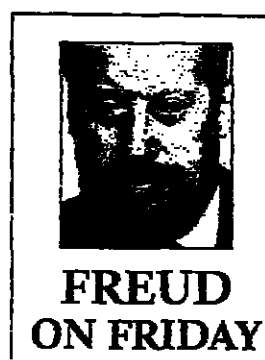
It is shooting day at the Varsity modern pentathlon match. Cambridge are tipped to win again; Oxford remain hopeful, "quietly optimistic about our chances" is the official version. In the dining room, where we had the sort of lunch about which one feels neutral and praises standards of hygiene, Andersen Consulting, sponsor of the event,

displays a range of silverware, champagne bottles and commemorative plaques to ensure that no one will leave empty-handed.

In the classical Olympic Games, the pentathlon consisted of discus, javelin, high jump, long jump and wrestling. It was the climax of the games. The winner ranked as the victor ludorum, Aristotle, in his *Rhetorics*, wrote: "The most perfect sportsmen are the pentathletes; in their bodies, strength and speed are combined in beautiful harmony."

Today's complete pentathlete runs and swims, shoots and fences and rides. In each discipline, excellence is marked with a score of 1,000 points, in pistol shooting for achieving 172. Twelve points are added to the magic thousand for each extra score or deducted for underperformance.

In running, the men execute four laps of a 1,000-metre cross-country course; a time of 7min 40sec is worth 1,000 points. Five pentathlon marks are added or subtracted per completed second within or outside this time. Swimming's 1,000 requires eight 25-metre lengths in 2min 54sec, with



FREUD ON FRIDAY

four points per second on or off. In fencing, each competitor fights each other competitor — 27 sudden-death épée bouts and 19 hits is the aim: 41 points per hit are added or subtracted.

The riding is over a show course, on an unfamiliar horse, after a 15-minute warm-up in which one can take no more than four practice jumps. A clear round within optimum time scores 1,000; transgressions lose points. Olympic pentathletes started at the Games of 1912, at the insistence of Baron de Coubertin, who wanted sculling rather than shooting; sculling presented organisational difficulties.

At Stockholm, there were 22

competitors, three from Great Britain and of the ten Swedes who competed, six finished in the first seven. Until a German victory in 1936, Swedish athletes dominated the sport. Then came the Hungarian era, followed by Pavel Lednev with two golds, two silvers and three bronzes between 1968 and 1980.

Britain's only individual success was a bronze in Mexico by the then Sergeant Jim Fox, though he won the team gold medal in Montreal, 1976. Fox, Nightingale and Parker, British women won every world event in the late Seventies and early Eighties, and continue to dominate pentathletism on the distaff side.

Julia Allen, 24, comes from Abingdon, in Oxfordshire, is a sixth and final-year veterinary student at Cambridge and probably our finest pentathlete. (Sadly, women's pentathlon is not an Olympic sport.) She swam from the age of seven, joined her local pony club at around that time, is a natural athlete, a brilliant shot and "rubbish at fencing".

Unlike the decathlon, in which each discipline demands athletic brilliance, technique and stamina, the

modern pentathlete is a multi-faced beast who must be half asleep and rigid during the shoot; wide awake and cunning for the épée, a natural runner who spends a lot of time in the swimming pool, and is an adequate horseman, with the substantial luck to be allocated an empathetic horse.

Ed Egan, Oxford final-year medic, was bred for this event by his father Michael, is one of our Olympic hopes, has achieved a score of 5,603, which is outstanding. In Atlanta, all five disciplines are contested in one day. At Tonbridge, the competition spans Thursday, Friday, Saturday, is altogether less frenetic, more fun... as it should be when half the participants bear the letters OUMPA on their trackuits and have the crown of Oxford shamed from the backs of their heads.

There is also constant conjecture on whether it is to be Saturday night's post-pentathlon banquet with Beef Wellington on the menu, or the late-night cross-germination of ideas between the men and women which will comprise the sixth discipline, and how is the scoring to be other than subjective?

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Dealer North	Love all	Rubber bridge
♠732 ♥A4 ♦QJ3 ♣AQ3	♠J109 ♥8653 ♦8652 ♣82	♠AQ854 ♥Q10 ♦AK7 ♣K94

W	N	E	S
Pass	1NT (12-14)	Pass	3S
Pass	4C (1)	Pass	4D (2)
All Pass			

Contract: Six Spades by South Lead: Jack of clubs

(1) North does not know from the Three Spade bid whether South is interested in a slam or merely looking for the best game. In case South has a slam in mind, North cue-bids his ace of clubs, which also shows a maximum hand with good spade support. (2) Showing the ace of diamonds and confirming slam interest. (3) A heart control, just what South wanted to hear.

The theme of this hand has come up in a previous Refreshers. South's main problem is how to play the trump suit. The standard safety play of this suit combination is to cash the ace and later lead up to the queen. Thus, declarer does not lose to the singleton king offside. However, the trouble with this play is that it guarantees that there will be at least one loser in the suit. This does not matter if the heart finesse is right, but if the heart finesse is wrong, declarer's only chance is to play the

trump suit for no loser and the way to do this is to take a first-round finesse.

The solution is not hard to spot. Rather than draw trumps immediately, declarer should first take a heart finesse. On this occasion, it will win, so declarer can afford to make the safety play in trumps. Had the queen of hearts lost to the king, declarer would have had to take a first-round trump finesse, thus still making his contract when East had Kx of trumps.

For details of *The Times* Midland Private Banking National Bridge challenge, contact the event organisers on 0181-942 9506 or write to: Britannia Building, Beverley Way, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PH or fax to: 0181-942 9569

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

ABNEY
a. A denial
b. A Suffolk signpost
c. An angular instrument

GONGORA
a. The Portuguese Inquisition
b. An orchid
c. Stuttering

DOGAN
a. To ditch
b. A Roman Catholic
c. A portable bed

CANOT
a. Sugar cane
b. A refusal
c. A big canoe

Answers on page 42

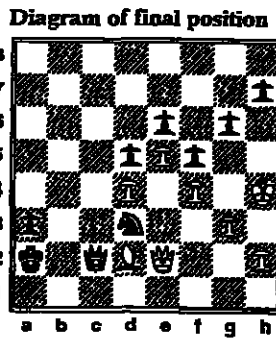
KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Anti-computer strategy
While world champion Garry Kasparov was overcoming the resistance of IBM's Deep Blue mainframe computer in Philadelphia, Nigel Short also took on the world micro-computer champion in a two-game match in Ecuador. Short took a leaf from Kasparov's book and applied slow manoeuvring tactics which ultimately led to the machine's strangulation in a long endgame. The key to computer-hostile strategy is to avoid open positions leading to sharp tactics at which the computers excel.

White: MChess Pro
Black: Nigel Short
Guayaquil, February 1995

French Defence	White	Black
1 e4	e6	
2 d4	d5	
3 Nc3	Nf6	
4 e5	Nd7	
5 f4	c5	
6 Nc3	Nc6	
7 Nd3	is	
8 Bc3	cd4	
9 cxd4	Nb6	
10 Ne2	Be7	
11 a3	a5	
12 O-O	O-O	
13 Bc3	a4	
14 Rc1	Be7	
15 Bc2	Na5	
16 Nd2	Na6	
17 Qc2	Qd7	
18 Rf1	Bb5	
19 Bxb5	Qxb5	
20 Nc3	Qb6	
21 Ra3	Nb4	
22 Nc4	Nb4	
23 Rh3	b5	
24 Qc2	g6	
25 Na2	Rf8	
26 Rc3	Na5	
27 Qe1	Rc3	

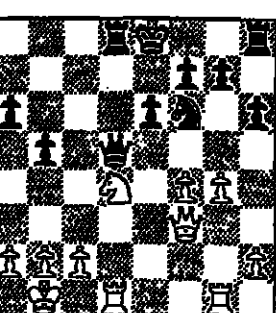


Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Malshauskas - Shirov, Tallinn 1996. Alexei Shirov, one of the world's most dangerous tactical players, here finds himself on the receiving end of a combination. How did White force immediate resignation?



Solution, page 42

Doncaster

Going: good to soft

1.35 (m 40) 1, Haysa Via Katsush (R French), 23-1; 2, Outstanding Welcome (20-1); 3, Golden Arrow (25-1); 4, Almhurst (20-1); 5, G. G. G. (20-1); 6, B. B. B. (20-1); 7, B. B. B. (20-1); 8, B. B. B. (20-1); 9, B. B. B. (20-1); 10, B. B. B. (20-1); 11, B. B. B. (20-1); 12, B. B. B. (20-1); 13, B. B. B. (20-1); 14, B. B. B. (20-1); 15, B. B. B. (20-1); 16, B. B. B. (20-1); 17, B. B. B. (20-1); 18, B. B. B. (20-1); 19, B. B. B. (20-1); 20, B. B. B. (20-1); 21, B. B. B. (20-1); 22, B. B. B. (20-1); 23, B. B. B. (20-1); 24, B. B. B. (20-1); 25, B. B. B. (20-1); 26, B. B. B. (20-1); 27, B. B. B. (20-1); 28, B. B. B. (20-1); 29, B. B. B. (20-1); 30, B. B. B. (20-1); 31, B. B. B. (20-1); 32, B. B. B. (20-1); 33, B. B. B. (20-1); 34, B. B. B. (20-1); 35, B. B. B. (20-1); 36, B. B. B. (20-1); 37, B. B. B. (20-1); 38, B. B. B. (20-1); 39, B. B. B. (20-1); 40, B. B. B. (20-1); 41, B. B. B. (20-1); 42, B. B. B. (20-1); 43, B. B. B. (20-1); 44, B. B. B. (20-1); 45, B. B. B. (20-1); 46, B. B. B. 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Unfairly assigned the lion's share of blame

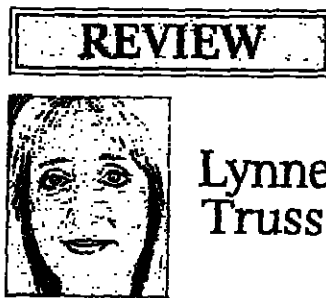
At the end of *Reputations* (BBC2) last night, the actress Virginia McKenna summed up reaction to the real Joy Adamson, whom she memorably portrayed in the film *Born Free*. "You either thought she was incredible and wonderful, or you couldn't tolerate her," she said. "There was no middle path. Banal as it may sound, this analysis came as a bit of a surprise. By this late stage, very little evidence had been found of anyone thinking Joy Adamson incredible or wonderful; she was by now bang to rights as a ruthless Teutonic man-eater with funny ideas about lions. Grizzled game park rangers, who had clearly always hated Joy Adamson for marrying the old male George, leant on their guns and confided the source of their unease. "She was a set-up, if that's the expression," said one, hilariously. Well, it's not the expression, actually.

As a subject for a revisionist exercise, Joy Adamson was easy prey. That *Born Free* film in 1966, celebrating love, coupledom, cross-species adoration and khaki shorts, failed to mention that Joy married George in Kenya during the war because she was an enemy alien who faced internment. So she seduced him in the bush (if that's the right expression) and the rest is history. George was taciturn, with an alcohol and tobacco habit (considered "woman-proof" by his many fans) so it's unlikely he proved the best of husbands. But the unhappiness of the marriage was cheerfully pinned on Joy last night, echoing the game-hunter consensus. George was a good, simple bloke. That Joy actually turned to lions for love speaks of a marital desperation that has so far gone unremarked.

This posthumous demolition of famous people's personalities is not a comfortable thing. At least

Reputations left Joy Adamson's achievements intact. *Born Free* had a huge effect on conservationist attitudes, and the syrupy film version included a sequence of Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna swimming either side of Elsa which made me weep, even now. Perhaps *Reputations* should have interviewed a few lions, instead of all the people who didn't like her. Elspeth Huxley, one of Joy's few fans, said *Born Free* was a love story; as such it was certainly touching. Incidentally, Huxley's caption included the words "God-parent to Elsa", an unexplained but rather wonderful distinction.

My postman doesn't like EastEnders (BBC1); he says it's like "walking into a trap" and I find myself powerless to counter an aversion as heartfelt (and vivid) as that. For those of us already struggling with our head in a clamp, however, last



Lynne Truss

night was a joyous occasion for two reasons. First, Kath (Gillian Taylor) finally had her baby, in a swift labour in her own home. And second, Pat (Pam St Clements) resorted to bitchiness, a subtle form of verbal attack much more rarely employed in Albert Square, where words are generally for and not against. Finally, Tiffany might put her minx face right up against Sam's little nose and say,

"You ain't got no friends, ave ya?", thus earning the familiar reproach from Grant that she is right out of order.

Anyway, the circumstances were these. Peggy (Barbara Windsor) was boasting about her imminent birthday party at the Vic, and trying Pat's patience, and then it happened. "You'd better go home and put your face on then," said Pat. Ooooooh. (Peggy had her face on already.) "She don't look a day over 60," Pat commented drily after Peggy had stomped off on her little leopardskin heels. Which was a big joke, you see, because she's supposed to be 54.

Of course Peggy's party got riotous at the Vic at precisely the time when Kath was in bed across the square, howling in labour, yelling for Phil. You may remember her howl, because Christmas, Arthur's painful interrogation scene, were similarly intercut with contrasting, ironic, ho-ho, clink-clink

meritment elsewhere. "Your baby's got some hair!" said Kath's midwife excitedly, but it was too obviously a set-up. She only had this line so that the viewers across the land could chorus, "Not like his dad, then" and feel clever for thinking it.

Channel 4's *Undercover* Britain concerned British building workers tipped off in Germany. It was *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* without the jokes; it was Ken Loach's *Riff Raff* with racism on top; and, like last week's astonishing film about illegal guns for sale, fully vindicated the use of hidden cameras to get a story no journalist could get in the conventional way. Ostensibly undertaking a less dangerous mission than confronting crack-head gun-runners in a car in Moss Side, this week's heroes (headed by Neil Davis) took their cameras on the windy roof of a site in East Berlin.

and found something equally terrifying. The roof was slippery; there was no scaffolding or safety barrier. It was attainable only by means of a ladder which was not secured, and not quite long enough either.

The real scandal, however, was that the men working these dangerous and illegal sites are often not paid afterwards, and can't do anything about their treatment except complain and move on. There are no contracts, and the deals are made on mobile phones by Dutch "subbies" (sub-contractors) whose consistent Dutchness was unquestioned, oddly. Why are all subbies Dutch? It was a mystery. But then all the roofers are Brits and Irish, and all the slave labour are Turks and Bosnians. You might say there was a hierarchical ladder here, arranged on racial principles. A ladder that unfortunately doesn't reach high enough and isn't attached to anything in the first place.

6.00am Business Breakfast (19254)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (CeeFax) (23735)
9.00am Breakfast News Extra (CeeFax) (6762087)
9.20am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (2138483)
9.45 Killy (s) (8952938)
10.30am Good Morning (s) (13071)
12.00pm News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (239803)
12.05pm Turnabout (s) (5402445)
12.30pm Going for a Song (s) (31803)
1.00pm One O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (26822)
1.30pm Regional News and weather (57419975)
1.40pm Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (94623261)
2.00pm Pebble Mill (s) (8318209)
2.40pm Moon over Miami (CeeFax) (s) (1022938)
3.30pm Ants in Your Pants (s) (6998093) **3.50pm Look Sharp!** (s) (5898984) **4.05pm The Littlest Post Shop** (7235782) **4.25pm The All New Poppy Show** (4545700) **4.35pm The Mask** (725532) **5.00pm Newsround** (CeeFax) (3471984) **5.10pm Blue Peter** (CeeFax) (s) (1154532)
5.35pm Neighbours (s) (CeeFax) (s) (618700)
6.00pm Six O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (241)

6.30pm Regional news magazines (551)
7.00pm Wipeout. Three contestants compete for the star prize of a holiday (CeeFax) (s) (5813) **WALESS**: 7.00pm Don't Look Back (5813)
7.30pm Tomorrow's World: Megalab 96 (CeeFax) (s) (735)
8.00pm Hi-De-Hi. Joe Maplin orders the camp staff to enter a local in the local carnival. With Paul Shane, Ruth Madoc and Jeffrey Holland (s) (CeeFax) (7261)
8.30pm A Question of Sport. Will Carling and Ian Botham are joined by Jack Russell, Gordon Sherry, Jeremy Guscott and Duraine Ladeby. Bill Beaumont takes over the questionmaster's seat for two weeks. (CeeFax) (s) (658)

9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (7006)
9.30pm FILM: Memoirs of an Invisible Man (1992) with Chevy Chase and Daryl Hannah. A stock analyst is made invisible in a freak accident and becomes the quarry of ruthless agents who want to employ his unusual gifts. Featuring him as pursuers, he learns up with the woman of his dreams for an adventurous spy escapade. Directed by John Carpenter (s) (919445) **N.J.**: 9.30pm P.K. Tonight **10.20pm FILM: Memoirs of an Invisible Man** (1992) with Chevy Chase and Daryl Hannah. A stock analyst is made invisible in a freak accident and becomes the quarry of ruthless agents who want to employ his unusual gifts. Featuring him as pursuers, he learns up with the woman of his dreams for an adventurous spy escapade. Directed by John Carpenter (s) (919445) **N.J.**: 9.30pm P.K. Tonight **10.20pm FILM: Memoirs of an Invisible Man** (1992) with Chevy Chase and Daryl Hannah. 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FRIDAY MARCH 22 1996

Graveney accepts nomination

Illingworth's
position
under threat

BY SIMON WILDE

RAYMOND Illingworth said that if his position as chairman of the England cricket selectors was to be challenged, he would fight his corner hard. He had better get into training fast. David Graveney, a fellow selector and nominated by Warwickshire, had no sooner been confirmed yesterday as his opponent than he was unveiling a power-packed manifesto perfectly capable of delivering a knockout blow.

The men could hardly be more different. Illingworth is 63 and autocratic, a style that won him many honours at county and international level on the field, but which has served him less well off it. Graveney is 43 and a democrat, as his work as general secretary of the Cricketers' Association testifies. He never played for England, never won a championship in his 23 years with Somerset, Gloucestershire and Durham, and has made few enemies.

What they have in common is a passion about the game and an ability to think deeply about it. Arguably, though, Illingworth's thoughts are going out of fashion fast, which may explain why the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB), understandably shocked and angry at England's results and demeanour at the World Cup, earlier this month ordered an inquiry into all aspects of the national team's management.

If Graveney wins the postal ballot among the 20 members of the TCCB, the result of which will be known on Tuesday, its inquiry may be rendered unnecessary, because he has specific and wide-ranging proposals to create an environment in which England could thrive again.

Graveney was at pains to stress that, if he replaced Illingworth, who has been chairman since 1994, he would not perform the same functions as his predecessor. He regards the chairman's role as an overseeing one — "making

sure the right structure is operating properly".

This structure would involve a larger back-room staff, in line with those that Australia and South Africa successfully employ. There would be a permanent team administrator, team manager and chief coach, and other coaches as well, each with specific duties.

For these positions, Graveney has in mind men of a similar vintage to himself, with Ian Botham high on his list of candidates. "I can see an important role for him in the dressing-room and in a general coaching and motivational capacity," he said yesterday. "He inspires and he gets on



Graveney: proposals

well with the players." The position of team administrator would be a natural one for John Barclay, who was an able assistant to Illingworth during the World Cup and in South Africa. Several counties are understood to have wanted Barclay to stand for the chairmanship, but he declined to do so. Perhaps Graveney's plans will attract such counties to his camp.

Others who could benefit from Graveney's appointment are David Lloyd, the Lancashire coach, and Mike Gatting, the Middlesex captain, who has long been earmarked for a national coaching role. Graveney made

it clear that he would like Michael Atherton to continue as captain for some time to come, his burden eased by the expanded administrative and coaching staff.

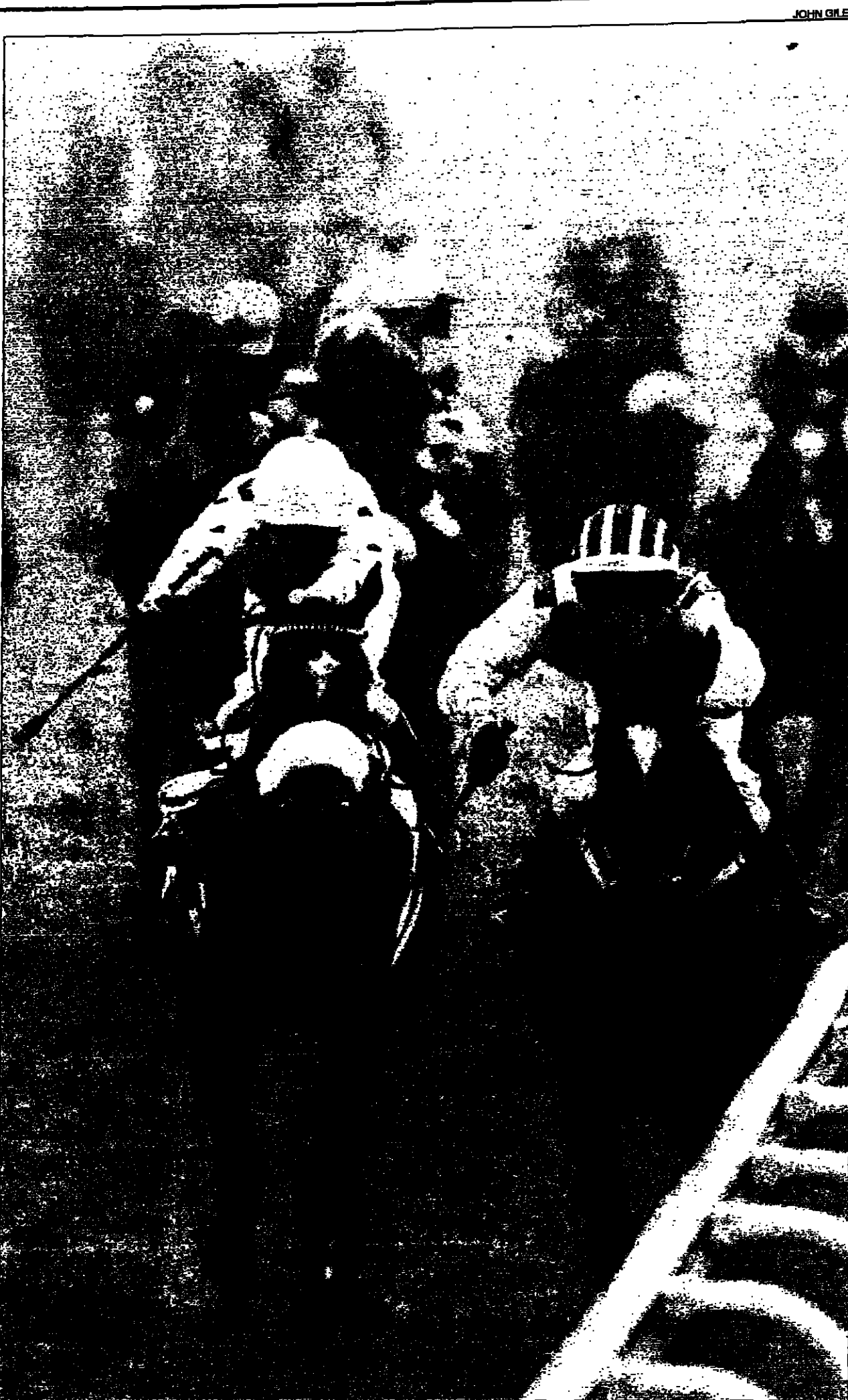
By comparison, Illingworth's ideas, such as they are, look thin. The central one was that he should be invested with unprecedented powers, being England manager and well as chairman, but after a year that policy has been condemned as a failure.

It had been thought likely that he would forfeit the position of manager, but he may lose both — and on the same day. His future as England manager will be considered by the TCCB's executive committee on Tuesday afternoon, directly before the result of the voting for chairman is announced.

Like Graveney, Illingworth wants to surround himself with men of his own generation, but some of the selectors and coaches he has favoured have been accused, like himself, of lacking empathy with the modern professional. Illingworth's unilateral decision-making — notably his last-minute switch of wicket-keepers before the Lord's Test match against West Indies last year — also lost him friends, and arguably deprived England of one of its leading benefactors, Patrick Whittingdale, who was upset at the equivocal support offered to Atherton.

Illingworth's reputation has always rested on his results rather than his methods. His fear must be that the counties will now judge him on his record, and kick him out.

□ Brian Lara may be summoned before the West Indies Cricket Board of Control's disciplinary committee after an altercation with Dennis Waight, the team trainer. Reports in Bridgetown yesterday suggested that Lara and Waight had been involved in an acrimonious exchange as the team flew to London from India after the World Cup.



Royston Ffrench, right, takes a short-lived lead in the 1996 jockeys' championship as he partners Haya Ya Kefaaah to victory over Outstayed Welcome in the first race of the turf Flat season at Doncaster yesterday. Racing, page 41

England's
train of
thought is
turned to
youngsters

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

THREE of England's most promising young footballers have been invited to join the national squad during preparations for the international match against Bulgaria at Wembley next Wednesday.

Terry Venables, the England coach, has extended a welcome to Lee Bowyer, the Charlton Athletic midfielder, Richard Wright, the Ipswich Town goalkeeper, and Ian Moore, a striker with Tranmere Rovers. Though there is no possibility of them appearing against Bulgaria, they will play a full part in training at Bisham Abbey.

For Bowyer, 19, it completes a swift return to grace after testing positive for cannabis a year ago in a random drug test carried out by the Football Association. "It's a brilliant opportunity for Lee," Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager, said. "He's the type of lad who learns very quickly and it will be a great education for him. He won't be overawed."

Bowyer has missed only three games for Charlton this season, scoring 14 goals, and has played for the England Under-18 and Under-21 sides. Arsenal and Liverpool are among the FA Carling Premiership clubs to have closely monitored his progress.

Wright, 18, the England Under-18 goalkeeper, has replaced Craig Forrest in the Ipswich first team and has made 19 appearances this season. An Ipswich spokesman said: "He couldn't believe it when he heard the news but he's a very level-headed lad and I'm sure he'll do well." Moore, 18, is the son of the coach at Prenton Park, Ronny Moore, and has scored ten goals for Tranmere this season.

"It's a sort of getting-to-know-you exercise, which is great experience for them," Steve Double, an FA spokesman, said.

□ The Bulgaria coach, Dimitar Penev, has chosen a squad close to full strength for the match at Wembley. Only the injured defender, Tsanko Tsvetanov, is missing from a party of 18.

SQUAD: B. Mikhailov, D. Popov, E. Kornev, I. Ivanov, P. Hristov, G. Ganchev, I. Kuyukov, R. Kishishov, Z. Yankov, D. Borimirov, I. Yordanov, H. Stoshkov, Y. Luchkov, K. Slavkov, E. Koshalov, B. Guevchev, N. Seikov.

Flitcroft poised to join
Blackburn for £3.5m

BY PETER BALL AND DAVID MADDOCK

GARRY FLITCROFT, Manchester City's England under-21 midfielder, is set to sign for Blackburn Rovers today. The Maine Road club accepted Blackburn's offer of £3.5 million and the player had a medical yesterday after agreeing personal terms.

Blackburn have admired Flitcroft, 23, for some time. Now, with the sale of David Barry to Newcastle United, they have replaced him with a strong competitor, but a more rounded — and much younger — footballer. They may consider they have got a bargain.

City's decision to sell, however, will cause consternation among supporters in their attempt to avoid relegation from the FA Carling Premiership. Flitcroft was regarded as a key player in the hoped-for regeneration of the club. Significantly, City have not won any of their ten matches this season in which Flitcroft has not played.

"The offer from Blackburn came out of the blue and was obviously very difficult to resist," Alan Ball, the City manager, said. "But the financial aspect wasn't the only consideration."

"There were footballing matters we had to take into account, like the development this season of Michael Brown. In fact, we have a glut of midfield players at Maine Road at the moment, and both I and my chairman [Francis Lee] felt that we could allow Garry to move without weakening our senior squad."

Ball will discuss with Lee the possibility of using some of the fee to sign new players, although he admitted it was a remote prospect. With Giuseppe Mazzarelli, the Switzerland Under-21 player, joining

City two weeks ago, and Mikhail Kavelashvili, the Georgia striker, waiting for a work permit, City are becoming more cosmopolitan by the month.

Flitcroft expressed mixed feelings about the move yesterday. "It will be a massive wrench to leave Maine Road," Flitcroft said. "I have been here since I was 12 and I have never considered leaving for one moment. I didn't know anything about it until I was

Solace for Leeds 39

told on Wednesday night that City had accepted their offer. It was a major shock to discover that City were prepared to sell me, but I suppose you have to be realistic and accept that these things happen in football.

"Obviously, it was an offer City felt they could not afford to turn down, and at least I have got the consolation of knowing that I am joining a very ambitious club. In many



Flitcroft: challenge

Yeboah to
coach in
Ghana on
retirement

BY PETER BALL

TONY YEBOAH, the Leeds United forward, announced yesterday that he will retire and return to Ghana when his three-year contract expires in the summer of 1998.

"I will be 32 by then, and I think that is time to stop playing football," Yeboah said yesterday as Leeds prepared for their Coca-Cola Cup Final against Aston Villa on Sunday. "I am going back to Okwaku United, my former club, to coach the six- to ten-year-olds. They need help to become good players. And I want my children to grow up in Ghana."

Yeboah, who cost Leeds £3.5 million when they signed him from Eintracht Frankfurt last year, has scored 32 goals in 54 starts for Leeds, a staggering rate in an inconsistent team, and one in which he has often been left to play on his own up front, rather than with a partner, as he prefers.

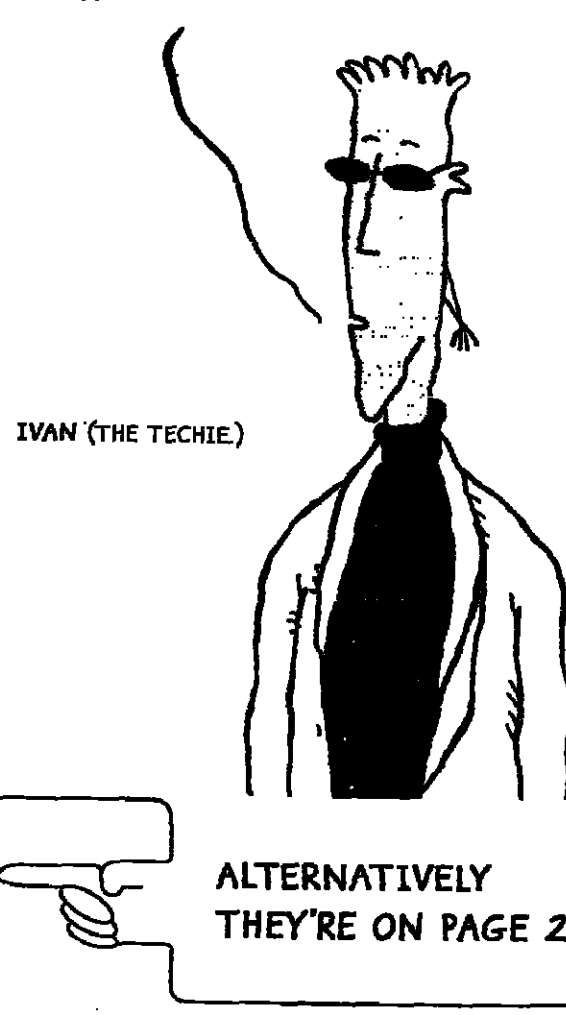
Before he leaves he will fulfil one ambition by playing at Wembley, and hopes to help Leeds to reach Europe and, next season, to challenge for the championship. "I know how important this game is; it is our last hope of qualifying for Europe."

"I am used to playing in Europe, and it will be very disappointing if we don't qualify. I would hope next season we will challenge for the league, but to do that we need one or two new players."

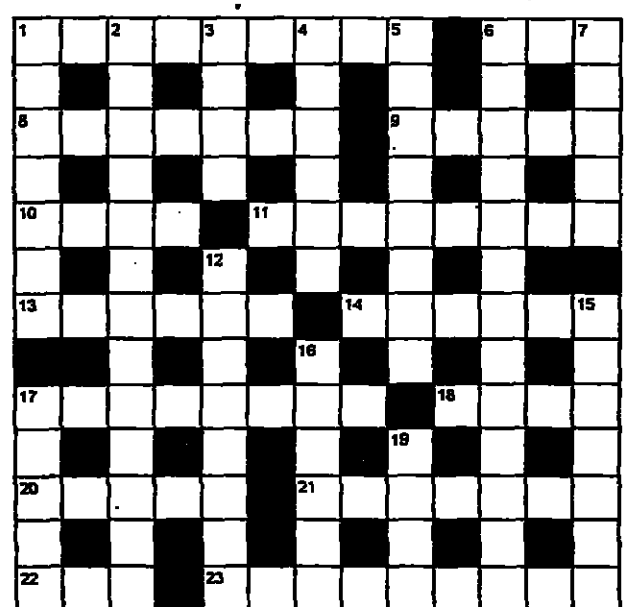
□ Anders Limpar, the Swedish winger, is to stay with Everton, whose manager, Joe Royle, told him that he will not be one of the players to go in the end-of-season clear-out.

The WORLD
of OLIVER
& CLAIRE

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ALTERNATIVELY
THEY'RE ON PAGE 25

TIMES TWO
CROSSWORD

No 736

ACROSS

- 1 End of digit; brief (sketch) (9)
- 6 Weep convulsively (3)
- 8 Achieve revenge (3,4)
- 9 Way (to an end); wealth (5)
- 10 Ex-Yugoslav dictator (4)
- 11 Lower-wall wood panel (8)
- 13 A monkey; a blood factor (6)
- 14 Ape; expose, humiliate (4,2)
- 17 Shaven yob (8)
- 18 Uninvitingly dull (4)
- 20 Planet; underworld god (5)
- 21 Barbary pirate (7)
- 22 Sussex port; cereal (3)
- 23 Inlaid woodwork (9)

DOWN

- 1 More drunk, fast (7)
- 2 Au courant (2,2,3-6)
- 3 Gargle of girls (4)
- 4 Toughen (metal) by heat (6)
- 5 Of which Don Quixote was Man (2,6)
- 6 Police entry permit (6,7)
- 7 Surround, attack (5)
- 12 Proverbially fast-growing fungus (8)
- 15 Onset of adolescence (7)
- 16 Piece of crockery, may fly (6)
- 17 Splendid; an extra (5)
- 19 German wife (4)

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